



THE
British Nostarch;
OR
BIOGRAPHICAL ENTERTAINER.

Being a SELECT COLLECTION of
The LIVES at large
Of the most EMINENT MEN,
Natives of Great Britain and Ireland
from the Reign of HENRY VIII. to GEORGE II

Both inclusive

Whether distinguished as
Statesmen [Warriors,] Poets
Patriots, [Divines,] Philosophers

Thinned with OPIAPLITES
A New Edition



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For EDWARD DILLY in the Poultry,

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TO THE
K I N G.

SIRE,

THE design of the following work is to convey instruction by the channel of amusement: and, by regarding the actions of illustrious men, to enforce, by such examples, the practice of those virtues, which are most conducive to the prosperity of a state, as well as of private societies; while the errors which will now and then discover themselves in the most shining characters,

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DEDICATION.

are pointed out, and made use of, as a shade to display the brightness of more exalted qualities to the greater advantage.

This being the plan they have laid down to themselves, to whom can the authors of the BRITISH PLUTARCH with so much propriety dedicate their labours, as to a monarch, who in himself affords a living pattern of all those great and social endowments, which they strive to recommend; who is a careful discountenance vice, as he is incapable of committing it; and enjoys the glory of being in reality whatever flattery hath hitherto endeavoured to make princes appear.

But it would be an unpardonable presumption for us to attempt in this

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this place a panegyric on Your Majesty's virtues ; besides, that in doing so, we could only repeat the daily conversation of every individual in your three kingdoms : we shall content ourselves, therefore, with paying the tribute of silent admiration, and entreating your Majesty's gracious acceptance of what we now most humbly lay at your feet ; not as an offering worthy of you, but as a small testimony of our veneration and duty.

That your Majesty may still enjoy an uninterrupted series of health and prosperity ; that you may live many, many years, to be the patron of arts, the encourager of learning, the asserter of liberty, the defender of religion, and the father of your country ; and that you may leave

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a numerous progeny behind you,
to perpetuate those inestimable blessings
to an affectionate and grateful people, are the ardent wishes of

SIRE,

Your Majesty's

Most dutiful,

And obedient

Subjects and Servants,

The EDITORS.

P R E F A C E.

OUR modern prefaces are so seldom looked into, and are in general of so little use, that the authors of the following work should not have imposed one upon their readers, had they not, in their proposals, referred the public, for some account of their design, to what they intended to say in such a preliminary address in their first volume: for this reason, they should avoid flourishes of all kinds; and, considering brevity as the point chiefly to be aimed at, content themselves with just mentioning in what they think all formal collections of English Biogra-

phy have been faulty ; and the means by which they hope to render their own preferable to every thing of the kind that has gone before.

Among the few collections of national lives that have hitherto been published in this kingdom, the Biographia Britannica undoubtedly stands foremost, we had almost said alone, in merit ; but containing six volumes in folio, which cost upwards of ten pounds, its size and price have confined it to a particular class of readers, and render it much fitter for the library than the closet : add too, that its method (being digested in the manner of a dictionary, and giving a great deal more in notes, than uninterrupted narrative) hath left it rather as a useful and faithful register, to be applied to for occasional information, than a book for ordinary perusal. Indeed, though some of the lives to be found in it afford all that entertainment which we make one of the principal objects of our own attention, there are, from the nature of its plan, such a multitude of others, which give little more than the name, and birth-place of the person treated of, that the former can hardly be considered as a compensation for the dryness and sterility of the latter, in any sense,

sense, but such as we have above mentioned: and in this latter class we comprehend all those smaller biographical vocabularies, called dictionaries, which yield no manner of entertainment, but are compiled like parish registers, and give just as satisfactory an account of the lives of illustrious men, as the Dutch almanacks do of the reigning kings and princes of Europe.

If there be any truth in the foregoing remarks, as we flatter ourselves there is, the work now ushered into the world will require very little apology; the imperfections of former Biographers in the same tract, are sufficiently ascertained; and, in consequence, the expediency of a collection, better calculated for a general circulation. To this we have endeavoured to contribute, by our manner of publication, and the cheapness and smallness of our volumes: but not only so; we have likewise been more than ordinarily studious, to render the contents of our volumes both useful and entertaining, and to discharge a narrative of every circumstance likely to render it confused or tedious.

With

With this view we have not commenced our memoirs from the earliest annals, because we apprehend, that the lights to be drawn from remoter ages, especially with regard to such individuals as flourished in those periods, are extremely weak and imperfect; but if they were not so, what examples do the times of ignorance, barbarity, and superstition afford, worthy of being held up to posterity? perhaps here and there one; but so defaced by the rust of antiquity, or so slightly sketched, thro' the incapacity or unattentiveness of contemporaries, as to shew few traces, from whence a regular draught can be formed. We begin our accounts in that age, in which truth and learning began to dawn, or rather blazed at once upon mankind, after many centuries of impenetrable darkness; when, in our own country in particular, opposite principles began to form distinct characters, and the great and good equally displayed themselves in the most conspicuous stations.

But even in the prosecution of this plan, we shall proceed with caution, and select our materials with a scrupulous nicety, in regard to what amusement they may afford. There have

have been many eminent men at all times, in every rank and profession, whose names are justly famous; yet when their lives come to be seen, they prove so barren of incidents, that ~~the~~ the coldest curiosity goes from them unsatisfied. For this reason, our readers must not accuse us of inaccuracy, if they find several persons omitted in this collection, who are highly celebrated among the British worthies, in church, state, and literature.

The minister, who is memorable only for his conduct in national affairs; and the general, who is never to be met with but in the field of war, are subjects more proper for the historian, than the Biographer, whose business, in fact, it is to gather and preserve what the other overlooks, or rejects, and to search for men in their retirements, rather than follow them through the hurry and bustle of public business.

As that great master of human nature, Plutarch, observes, it is often trifles in themselves, seemingly the most insignificant, which gives us the best insight to real characters; and in imitation of him, whose name we have prefixed to the title-page

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page of this work, we shall do our utmost to bring the contents of our volumes home to the hearts and business of our readers, by displaying, as much as possible, those domestic scenes, in which all men may, in a degree, be equally concerned.

As encroaching upon the prerogative of the historian, we shall not meddle with the lives of any of the British kings and princes, however famous; and as the study is, for the most part, the sphere of supineness, and poets and philosophers are generally more illustrious for their works than their actions, many of the greatest having pallid their days in such obscurity, as to leave little or nothing of themselves behind them, we shall only chuse such of those as have supported both the characters of men and actors.

On the whole, we propose doing every thing to render the BRITISH PLUTARCH an agreeable companion, while it is a useful monitor: it will contain several new lives, never before published. The greatest care will be taken in the necessary embellishments, and the public may be assured, that the work shall

shall not exceed twelve volumes, nor be discontinued any month till the whole is complete, which will then stand the purchaser in no more than eighteen shillings.

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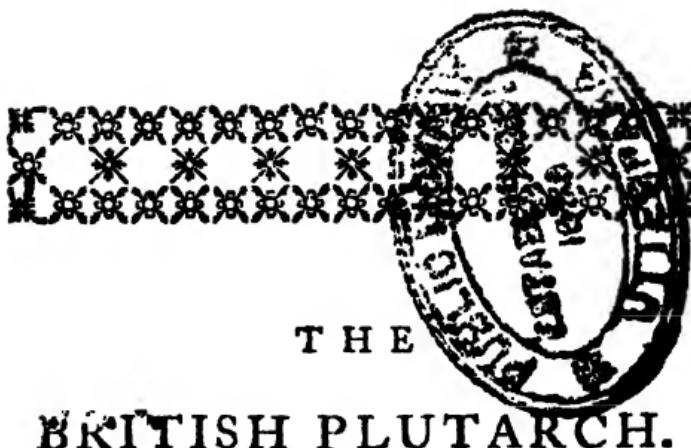
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CARDINAL WOLSEY



THE
BRITISH PLUTARCH.

THE LIFE OF
CARDINAL WOLSEY.

THOMAS WOLSEY, afterwards the famous cardinal, affords us, in his life, one of the most extraordinary examples to be met with in history, of the variableness and uncertainty of human events ; who being but the son of a poor butcher in the town of Ipswich in Suffolk, was, from that mean beginning, raised to the highest stations both in church and state : but, like an idol, set up by fortune, merely to shew her power, was again, in an instant, tumbled from all his greatness ; and reduced even to a more wretched condition than that from which he was originally taken. 'Tis true, indeed, he enjoyed the advantage of a liberal

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education ; for we find, that his father observing in him an uncommon aptness to learn, sent him by times to the grammar-school ; from whence, through the interest and generosity of friends, he was removed to and maintained at the university of Oxford. But here he made a progress, which is altogether astonishing. His servant Cavendish assures us, that a very few months after entering Magdalene college, and so early as his fifteenth year, Wolsey was made a bachelor of arts ; in consequence of which he was called, The boy-bachelor : He was then admitted to a fellowship in the same college ; and in the end nominated master of Magdalene school, where the sons of the then marquis of Dorset were placed for their education.

This was a circumstance extremely lucky for the new preceptor ; for the marquis, sending for his sons, on the succeeding Christmas, to pass the holidays at his country seat, invited the master along with the scholars ; and he was so highly pleased with Wolsey's conversation, who, to his universal knowledge, added a most insinuating address ; and found the young gentlemen so much improved for the short time they had been under his care ; that he determined to reward such merit and diligence with some distinguished mark of approbation : and a benefice in his lordship's gift falling vacant during the vacation, he bestowed it on Wolsey, which was his first ecclesiastical preferment.

This

This happened in the year one thousand five hundred, our cardinal being then about twenty-two years old: and as soon as he returned from his noble patron's seat, he was initiated to the ~~rectory~~ of Lymington. But here he met with an indignity which, to a man of his acknowledged haughtiness, must have been cruelly provoked.

One Sir Amias Pawlet, a gentleman of Hampshire, and one of Wolsey's parishioners, conceived a violent displeasure against him. It has been said, indeed, that Wolsey, by a scandalous licentiousness in his behaviour, drew upon himself the knight's resentment; and it should seem that something very extraordinary, though now uncertain, was the cause; and something very different from a private pique; since Sir Amias inflicted on him a legal punishment, and one which, considering his character, would hardly have been inflicted on a slight occasion. In a word, the knight set the doctor in the stocks: and when Wolsey came to be lord high chancellor of England, he did not forget the affront; for, sending for Sir Amias to London, after having very sharply reprimanded him for his former indecent and disrespectful behaviour towards a clergyman; and a person to whom, as a pastor, he owed obedience; he ordered, that Sir Amias, on no account should presume to quit the capital, without a licence first obtained: in consequence of which prohibition, that gentleman continued in the Middle Temple no less than six years; though he endeavoured by many

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little acts of adulation and submission, to soften the cardinal's anger.

But, to return to the thread of our narrative. This mortifying accident gave Wolsey a distaste to Lymington ; and the death of his patron, the marquis of Dorset, which happened shortly after, finally determined him to leave it. And the next situation we find him in, is, that of chaplain to Dr. Dean, archbishop of Canterbury ; a station to which the author of the British Antiquities is inclinable to think, Wolsey recommended himself by his own affiduity, rather then by the interest of others. Here he grew greatly in favour with the most reverend prelate, and by his means the name of Wolsey was for the first time mentioned at the court of Rome ; the pope, at the archbishop's request, granting his chaplain a dispensation to hold two benefices, a thing in those days very singular. However, this was the greatest advantage Wolsey reaped from his connection with Dr. Dean, that prelate being suddenly taken off ; so that he was again soon obliged to look out for another patron.

A man of true parts, and proportionable industry, is seldom disappointed in any views on which he employs the whole strength of his understanding. Wolsey found in himself a particular inclination to a court-life ; and, from several of his expressions, it should seem as if he had been possessed with a notion of the ~~grandeur~~, which awaited him in that sphere ; he resolved therefore to attach himself to some person capable of introducing him to people

CARDINAL WOLSEY: 5

power; and having, during his residence in the west of England, contracted an acquaintance with Sir John Nephant, who, at the time of archbishop Dean's death, was governor of Calis, and the great favourite of Henry VII, he thought he could not do better than offer his service there; and Sir John being just on the point of going over to Calis, he took Wolsey along with him as one of his domestic chaplains.

Now a new scene opened, and Wolsey began to act a part much better adapted to his talents, though very different from any he had hitherto played. Sir John Nephant was an old man, in want of some person able to relieve him from the heavy load of government; and being, as we may suppose, previously acquainted with his chaplain's abilities, he made very little difficulty of committing every thing to his care and management. Wolsey by no means forfeited the great trust reposed in him: he discharged the office of governor, with extraordinary order, skill, and fidelity; and upon Sir John's being, at his own request, called home, when he retired to pass the remainder of his days in the country, he recommended Wolsey in a particular manner to the king; and, as a reward of his faithful services, had the satisfaction of seeing him inrolled among the number of royal chaplains.

Thus Wolsey at last cast anchor, in his desired port; and he did not scruple to say, that there were no advantages, however great, which he did not expect in consequence of that

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event. However, as he knew that a bare compliment at court was not sufficient to secure a man's future fortune, without a peculiar interest among the courtiers, he enquired out those who were most acceptable to the king; and paid his devoirs with such success to Fox, bishop of Winchester, and Sir Thomas Lovel, the then reigning favourites, that a little time he was considered by every body as a rising man; nor was it long before the friends which he had made by his address were enabled to shew their readiness to serve him.

In the year 1513, the emperor Maximilian being arrived in Germany, king Henry recollect ed an agreement which he had made with the late Philip of Spain, about espousing his sister Margaret, and then seemed desirous to consummate the marriage: but as there were some previous points to be settled with the emperor, it put him upon enquiring after a proper person to send as his ambassador, Wolsey's office had given him frequent opportunities of being in the king's presence; he had even, upon some occasions, contrived to attract his majesty's notice: he was no sooner mentioned therefore by Fox and Lovel, as one excellently qualified to perform the service Henry required, than the king commanded him immediately to be sent for, and on some private discourse, being fully satisfied of his capacity, his dispatches were ordered; and on the Sunday following, at four o'clock in the afternoon, he set forward from Richmond, at which place Henry VII. then kept his court.

But

But how was Henry then surprized, in less than three days after, to see Wolsey present himself before him! Supposing he had protracted his departure, he at first began to reprove him for the dilatory execution of his orders; but Wolsey informed him (as was really the case, through many favourable circumstances which concurred in expediting his journey) that he was just returned from Brussels, and had successfully settled the negotiation with which he was charged. "Ay!" said the king, "but, on second thoughts I found somewhat had been omitted in your instructions, and I sent a messenger after you, with fuller powers." To which Wolsey replied, "That he had indeed met the messenger on the road in his return, and received the powers his majesty mentioned; but having, during his stay at the imperial court, preconceived the purport of them, and the close connection that business bore with his majesty's service, he had presumed, on his own authority, to rectify what he considered as a mistake in his commission, and humbly implored pardon for daring to exceed it."

The death of Henry VII. soon after this incident, was the reason why Wolsey received no mark of that monarch's good opinion, unless we reckon the deanry of Lincoln, and the place of almoner to the king: but the bishop of Winchester from that moment redoubled his affection; and observing, upon the commencement of the next reign, that the earl of

Surry

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Surry stood too much between him and the throne, he introduced Wolsey into the young king's familiarity, that he might rival that nobleman in his insinuating arts, and yet be content to act in the cabinet a part subordinate to the person who had promoted him. But here the bishop was wretchedly mistaken in his policy ; for, in a little time, ~~Wes~~^{Wolv} gained so much on Henry's good graces, that he not only supplanted Surry in his favour, but Fox in his trust and confidence.

The youthful character of Henry VIII. is well known, which was as remarkable for gaiety and dissipation, as his maturer years were for cruelty and injustice ; and it seems to be upon this basis, that Wolsey began to build his fortune ; for being admitted to all the royal parties of pleasure, he was ever the most facetious in company, and appeared studious to promote by a thousand devices that mirth and festivity, which were so suitable to his master's age and inclination.

But what greatly contributed to fix Wolsey in the king's esteem, was, the grand expedition, which, in the fifth year of his reign, he led in person against the kingdom of France. He committed the whole charge of furnishing and providing that vast fleet and army to the almoner : and Wolsey, though the task to him was new, and to any one must have been difficult, took it upon him without repining, to shew that he would not scruple his sovereign's commands in any thing.

The

The apparatus was ordered in the compleatest manner, and the success of Henry's arms extraordinary: but an emperor of Germany, having received pay from, and served under, a king of England; and the famous battle of Guinegate, or Spurs, as it is generally called, because the French, in that action, made more use of their spurs than their swords; have rendered the events of this expedition too notorious to warrant a repetition here: yet we may not omit to mention, that Henry having laid seige to, and taken Tourney, conferred the bishopric of that see on Wolsey, as a recompence for his attendance on this enterprize: and that, as soon as his majesty retuned to England, after having settled all affairs to his satisfaction on the continent, he further distinguished his favourite, by giving him the bishopric of Lincoln, just then vacant by the death of Dr. Smith; whose goods Wolsey found a way to get into his hands; and great part of them, as Cavendish observes, were employed in furnishing a house the king bestowed on him, near Bridewell: though we find, that not long after this translation to the archbishopric of York, he removed from thence to York-house, now Whitehall, where he remained to the time of his declension.

We have already mentioned Henry's extreme love of pleasure, which Wolsey was always industrious to stimulate; we shall, in this place, give a description of one of the sumptuous entertainments he provided for that monarch;

monarch ; as it will at once shew the cardinal's magnificence, and the gallantry of those days, so widely different from what we see at present. I have known the king (says Cavendish) come suddenly to my lord cardinal's house in a mask, with a dozen noblemen dressed like shepherds in gold and silver tissue, having six torch-bearers, besides drummers and other attendants all masked, and clothed in satin. His majesty came by water, and immediately at his landing, several cannon, which were placed ready for the purpose, being discharged, his excellency, (who was then sitting at a banquet with a great company of gentlemen and ladies) as though he knew nothing of the matter, sent his chamberlain to know what the firing of the guns meant. Now (says Cavendish) the order of the feast was as follows: The tables were set in the presence chamber covered ; my lord cardinal sitting under a rich canopy at the upper end, at a table by himself. Then there were set a lady and a nobleman, a gentleman and gentlewoman, through all the tables : which order was contrived by my lord Sands, lord chamberlain to the king, and Henry Guilford, his majesty's comptroller. Then word was immediately brought the cardinal, that several noble strangers were arrived, who, as it was supposed, were come ambassadors from some foreign prince ; upon which, desiring them to be directly introduced ; the king and his company entered the chamber amidst the noise of drums and flutes, and going by two and two up to the cardinal's seat,

feast, the whole band saluted him. Then the chamberlain, addressing the cardinal, said ;
“ Sir, Forasmuch as these strangers cannot
“ speak English, they have desired me to de-
“ clare unto you, that having understanding
“ of this your triumphant banquet, and as-
“ sembly of such a number of fair dames ;
“ they could do no less (under the supporta-
“ tion of your grace) than view as well their
“ incomparable beauties, as accompany them
“ in mum-chance, and after that dance with
“ them, so as to beget their better acquaint-
“ ance. And furthermore, they require of
“ your grace licence to accomplish this cause
“ of their coming.” To which the cardinal
answered, “ That he was willing, and very
“ well content they should do so.”

Then the maskers went, and having saluted all the ladies round, a gold cup was uncovered by one of them filled with crowns and other pieces of money. After which another taking out a pair of dice, they played at hazard with the ladies, winning from some, and losing to others ; till tired of that sport, they again went towards the cardinal, and pouring down their gold, which amounted to above two hundred crowns before him ; “ At all,” cried his eminence ; and throwing the dice won it ; at which, adds Cavendish, there was great joy. Then said the cardinal to my lord chamberlain, “ I pray you tell these gentlemen, that “ to me it seemeth that there should be a noble-
“ man among them, that better deserves to sit
“ in this place than I, to whom I should glad-
“ ly

“ Iy surrendre the same, according to thy
“ duty, if I knew him.”- Then my lord
chamberlain addressed himself to the company
in French, returned to the cardinal, and said,
“ Sir, they confess, that among them is such
“ a noble personage, whom, if your grace can
“ point out from the rest, he is contented to
“ disclose himself, and accept of your place.”
Upon this the cardinal taking good advice,
went among them ; at last, said he, “ It seem-
“ eth to me that the gentleman with the black
“ beard shoulde be the one I want.” And with
that he rose out of his chair, and offered it to
him : but the cardinal was out ; for the per-
son to whom he then offered his chair was Sir
Edward Neville, a gentleman very genteel
and well made, who more resembled his
majesty’s person than any other in the mask.
You may be sure this mistake caused some sport.
The king laughed heartily at the cardinal’s
being deceiv’d ; and pulling down his own
vizard, and Sir Edward Neville’s, with much
good humour, was intreated by the whole
company to take his place. But he made an-
swer, “ He would first go and shift him.”
And accordingly retiring into the cardinal’s
bedchamber, where there was a great fire, and
every thing laid ready, he put on a magnificent
habit ; and then coming again into the cham-
ber with his maskers, who were all new dres-
sed also, he took his seat under the canopy,
commanding every body to sit still, as they
had done before. During the king’s absence
the former service had been entirely remov’d,
and

and the table covered a-new with clean perfumed cloathes ; and now there was brought in a banquet of two hundred dishes : and so (says Cavendish) our noble company passed the night in banqueting and dancing till morning.

It was about five years after Wolsey's entrance into Henry's service, that the duke of Norfolk, finding the exchequer almost exhausted, was glad to resign his office of treasurer, and retire from court. Fox too, bishop of Winchester, partly overcome by years and infirmities, and partly disgusted at the ascendant acquired by Wolsey (though we do not find in what the cardinal ever slackened his respect or affection towards his old benefactor) withdrew himself entirely to the care of his diocese. The duke of Suffolk also had taken offence, that the king, by the favourite's persuasion, had refused to pay a debt, which he had contracted during his abode in France ; and he thenceforth affected to live in privacy. These incidents left Wolsey without a rival, and his power over the king became absolute ; though, when Fox, before his retirement, warned Henry " not to suffer the servant to be greater than his master." That prince replied, " That he knew well how to retain all his subjects in obedience."

But it was a master-stroke of policy in our artful prelate, that while he secretly directed all public councils, he still pretended a blind submission to the royal will ; by that means concealing from his sovereign, whose imperi-

ous temper would otherwise have ill brooked a director, the absolute power he was gaining over him. And Henry, in nothing more violent than his attachments while they lasted ; thought he could never sufficiently reward a man so entirely devoted to his pleasure and service. In consequence of this, Wolsey held at one time such a multitude of preferments, as no churchman besides himself was ever endowed with ; he was even suffered to unite with the see of York, the bishopricks of Durham and Winchester, with the rich abbey of St. Albans ; till the pope observing the daily progress he made in the king's favour, and that in fact he governed the nation, became desirous of engaging so powerful a minister in the interest of the apostolic state, and to complete his exaltation at once, created him a cardinal, under the title of St. Cecilia, beyond the river Tyber.

The grandeur which Wolsey assumed upon this new acquisition of dignity, is hardly to be paralleled ; the splendor of his equipage, and costliness of his apparel, exceeds all description. He caused his cardinal's hat to be borne aloft by a person of rank ; and, when he came to the king's chapel, would permit it to be laid on no place but the altar. A priest, the tallest and most comely he could find, carried before him a pillar of silver, on the top of which was placed a cross : but not content with this parade, to which he thought himself entitled as cardinal, he provided another priest of equal stature and beauty, who marched

marched along, bearing the cross of York, even in the diocese of Canterbury; contrary to the antient rule and agreement between those rival metropolitans. The people indeed made merry with the cardinal's ostentation upon this occasion; and said they were now sensible, that one cross alone was not sufficient for the expiation of his offences. But Warham, chancellor, and archbishop of Canterbury, having frequently remonstrated against this affront, to no purpose; chose rather to retire from public employment, than wage an unequal contest with the haughty cardinal. He resigned his office of chancellor therefore, and the seals were immediately intrusted to Wolsey.

The cardinal, while he was only almoner to the king, had rendered himself extremely unpopular, by his sentences in the star-chamber, a most arbitrary and unconstitutional court, where he presided, and gave every thing as his master would have it, without any respect to the justice of the cause. But now that he was lord high chancellor of England, he made full amends, by discharging that great office with as penetrating a judgment, and as enlarged a knowledge of law and equity, as any of his predecessors or successors: yet, even then, he was not free from the censure of maladministration in other matters; which we shall give the reader the most impartial account of, that we have been able to gather from the several authors who have mentioned it.

Cardinal Campeggio had been sent as a legate into England, in order to procure a tythe from the clergy, for enabling the Pope to oppose the progress of the Turks, a danger which was real and formidable to all Christendom, but had been so often made use of to serve the interested purposes of the court of Rome, that it had lost all influence on the minds of the people; the clergy refused to comply with Leo's demand; Campeggio was recalled; and the king desired of the pope, that Wolsey, who had been joined in this commission, might alone be invested with the legantine power, together with the right of visiting all the clergy, and monasteries; and even with suspending the whole laws of the church during a twelve month.

This additional honour was no sooner obtained, than Wolsey made a great display of pomp and magnificence. On solemn feast-days he was not contented without saying mass after the manner of the pope himself: he had not only bishops and abbots to serve him; but even engaged the first nobility to give him water and a towel; and Warham the primate having wrote him a letter, where he subscribed himself, "Your loving brother," Wolsey complained of his presumption, in challenging such an equality: upon Warham's being told however of the offence he had given, he made light of it, saying, "know ye not that this man is drunk with too much power." But Wolsey carried the matter much farther than vain pomp and ostentation. He erected

erected an office, which he called the legantine court ; in which, if credit may be given to Lord Herbert, whose words we make use of, he exercised a most odious and tyrannical jurisdiction. He made the judge of it, one Allen, a man of scandalous life, whom he himself, as chancellor, had condemned for perjury. This wretch committed all sorts of rapine and extortion : for, making an enquiry into the life of every body, no offence escaped censure and punishment, unless privately bought off ; in which people found two advantages ; one, that it cost less ; the other, that it exempted them from shame. Thus, as the rules of conscience are in many cases of greater extent than those of law, so he found means of searching into their secret corners ; besides, under this colour, he arrogated a power to call in question the executors of wills, and the like. He summoned also all religious persons (of what degree soever) before him ; who, casting themselves at his feet, were grievously chided, and terrified with expulsion, till they had compounded : besides that all spiritual livings which fell were conferred on his creatures.

No one dared carry to the king any complaint against these usurpations of Wolsey, till Warham ventured to do it ; Henry professed his ignorance of the whole matter. "A man (said he) is not so blind any where as in his own house. But do you go to Wolsey, and tell him, if any thing be a grief, that he amend it." A reproof of

this kind was not likely to be minded, and in effect only served to augment Wolsey's enmity to Warham, whom he had never loved since the dispute about erecting his crosses; however, one *London* having prosecuted the legate's judge in a court of law, and convicted him of malversation and iniquity, the clamour at last reached the king's ears, who rebuked the cardinal so sharply, that from that time he became, if not better, more wary than before.

The cardinal was now building himself a very magnificent palace at Hampton Court, whither sometimes he retired as well to mark the progress of the work, as to procure a short recess from the fatigues of his business; which at that time was very great, considering that, over and above what immediately related to his archbishoprick, his legantine character, and his place of chancellor, he had all the affairs of the nation on his hands; yet the public tranquility was so well established, and the general administration of justice, through his means, so exact, that ease and plenty blest the land, in a manner unknown for many preceding reigns. This happy disposition at home, led Henry, in the year 1520, to give way to the solicitations of Francis the First, king of France; and he consented to an interview with that monarch, which was to be between Guiene and Arde; the kings, by mutual consent, committing the regulation of the ceremonial to the cardinal's abilities, which he displayed upon that memorable occasion

occasion so applicably, as to acquire the applause, and receive the congratulation of most of the states of Europe.

The senate of Venice in particular, addressed him in a letter, in which they felicitated him on the fortunate conduct of an event that required the most consummate prudence; the pope too gave him very strong testimonies of his approbation, granting him a yearly pension of 2000 ducats, and constituting him perpetual administrator of the bishopric of Badjaos. But it must be acknowledged, that, during the whole course of Wolsey's administration, his friendship was courted by the proudest princes; nay, even the haughty Spaniard condescended to write him a very respectful epistle, intreating him to favour that crown by the acceptance of 3000 livres per annum; the grant was dated at Ghent, June 8, 1517, and the catholic king styled him in it, "our most dear and special friend."

By these extensive subsidies from foreign courts, and the unlimitted munificence of his own sovereign, who was continually loading him with spiritual and temporal monopolies, Wolsey's income is reported to have fallen little short of the revenues of the crown of England. This was a circumstance sufficient to raise the ambition of a man, naturally so aspiring as the cardinal, to any height.

Upon the death of pope Leo the Tenth, he thought of nothing less than being possessed of St. Peter's chair; and immediately dispatched

patched a secretary with proper instructions to Rome ; at the same time writing to the emperor, and the king of France, to assure them, that if he was elected supreme Pontiff, they should meet with such friendly and equitable treatment as they could expect from no other quarter. The former of these princes indeed, was bound by promise to assist Wolsey in procuring the papacy ; which he had repeatedly given him, during a short visit he made to the English court, just before Henry's passage into France ; but ere the messenger arrived at Rome, the election was over, and Adrian, bishop of Tortosa, who had been the emperor's tutor, was chosen ; though Wolsey, upon different scrutinies, had nine, twelve, and nineteen voices.

He was, probably, chagrined at the behaviour of Charles the Fifth, who had openly violated his word with him ; yet smothering his resentment for the present, when the emperor made another visit to England, (partly to appease him, whom he feared to have offended) the cardinal very readily accepted his excuses ; and on Adrian's death, which happened some years after, he applied again for Charles's interest, which was positively engaged to him for the next vacancy : but though this application was backed by a commendatory letter under Henry the Eighth's own hand ; and Wolsey knowing the power of gold in the conclave, had taken care to work sufficiently with that engine ; his hopes, however, of the pontificate were a second time

time rendered abortive ; chiefly owing to his absence, and his reliance on the emperor ; who never intended he should be pope, though, in imitation of other potentates, he made him several handsome allowances ; and at different times treated him with the utmost complaisance and distinction.

Notwithstanding, historians are in many circumstances extremely divided in the accounts they give of cardinal Wolsey, there is one point concerning him in which they all agree, and mention it as the highest eulogium on his character, that during his zenith of glory, whoever was distinguished by any art or science paid court to him, and none paid court in vain. Erasmus, though he was by no means an admirer of Wolsey, pays him great compliments on his generous encouragement of learning, he and the learned ; and both universities, in several speeches and addresses, publickly acknowledged the inestimable favours which they had received from his bounty. In Oxford particularly, among many other branches of erudition which he planted there, he established the first Greek professorship ; but not thinking that a sufficient mark of his esteem, in the year 1525, he determined to build a college, as a lasting monument of his zeal and gratitude towards the seminary in which he had received his education ; and having obtained the royal assent to commence his projected foundation, the first stone of that magnificent structure, then called Cardinal, but now Christ's college Oxford, was

was laid, with a supercession in honour of the founder; the cardinal at the same time building a grammar school at Ipswich, the place of his nativity, to qualify young scholars for admittance to it.

But in the prosecution of these schemes he struck upon a rock, which had like to shatter him to pieces; for having raised his college on the scite of a priory, dissolved and given him by the king for that purpose; he also procured authority to suppress several monasteries in different parts of the kingdom, in order to support his new society. Indeed the pope's bulls, which were sent over to confirm these grants, had often been a sanction for committing much greater offences; however, his seizing upon the revenues of religious houses, was looked upon as sacrilege; and the king for the first time openly approving the discontent of the people against him, several satires were published, reflecting on Wolsey's conduct. However, it does not appear that he thought it worth his while to enquire after any of the authors, notwithstanding Skelton, the poet laureat, was so apprehensive on account of some scurrilous verses of his writing, that he took refuge in the sanctuary, to avoid the cardinal's resentment.

But we are now come to a period of Wolsey's life, from whence we are obliged to look back, in order to account for the amazing change which lately appeared in his fortunes. The reader is to know then, that in

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the year 1522, a young lady was introduced at the English court, the daughter of Sir Thomas Bullen; who having been formerly in the service of the queen of France, Henry's sister, was received by queen Catherine as one of her maids of honour. It is said, the king no sooner saw her, than he was struck with her beauty; however, his passion lay concealed for some time, and was first discovered by the following accident.

The cardinal of York's revenue, and manner of living, in all respects, equalled the state of a sovereign prince. His household consisted of eight hundred persons, many of whom were knights and gentlemen, and even some of the nobility fixed their children in his family, as a place of education, suffering them to bear offices as his domestics. Among these was the earl of Northumberland, whose son, the lord Piercy, frequently attending the cardinal to court, had there an opportunity of conversing with the ladies: and he addressed Mrs. Bullen in particular, with so much persuasive eloquence, that in the end he gained her affections, and they were privately affianced to each other. Yet was not their amour conducted so secretly but it came to the king's ears; the violence of his temper immediately broke out; he ordered Wolsey to send for the earl of Northumberland; and the young nobleman being severely rebuked by his father for the indiscretion he had been guilty of, the affair ended in a formal dissolution of the contract; the marriage of lord Piercy

Piercy to a daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury's ; and the dismission of Anne Bullen from court to her relations in the country. But the impetuosity of the king's passion daily increasing, he could not long bear her out of his sight ; she was therefore recalled from her banishment, the following year : before that event a remarkable circumstance happened, which, as it gave rise to the subsequent proceedings in relation to the divorce, and was what opened the way to cardinal Wolsey's ruin, we must not pass over in silence.

In the year 1527, ambassadors came from France in order to conclude several treaties between Henry, and the French king ; one of which was, that Francis, or his son the duke of Orleans, should espouse the princess Mary, Henry's eldest daughter ; the commissioners met several times, and adjusted all points to mutual satisfaction ; but in proceeding upon this article, some dispute arose. The bishop of Tarboe, one of the French king's plenipotentiaries said, " he could not help having some doubts about the princess Mary's legitimacy, on account of her being the daughter of queen Catherine, who had formerly been married to prince Arthur :" and in short, he gave broad hints, that the king had committed an unlawful act in marrying his brother's widow : whether this objection was started by previous agreement, in order to serve the king's secret purposes, we cannot say : however, it is certain he made a handle of it, to excuse his after proceedings ; and

and from this time openly avowing his affections to Anne Bullen ; the courtiers worshipped her as the rising sun, through whose influence alone, the royal favour was to be raised and cultivated.

Wolsey could not be blind to the progress this fair favourite was making in his master's heart ; though in all probability he at first thought the king meant no more than to have an intrigue with her, with respect to which kind of intercourse, it is well known, his eminency entertained not the most evangelical notions ; he bowed with the crowd therefore, and left nothing untried that might engage the new mistress to his interest ; but when he found by some words his majesty let fall, that not being able to obtain the favours he sought from her, on any other terms than those of wedlock, he was determined at all events to pay down the price she exacted ; there was no argument possible to divert the king from his intention, that the cardinal did not use ; nay, he often repeated his prayers and intreaties on his knees : but his zeal was far from being pleasing to Henry, who could not bear any thing like restraint ; and this opposition to her advancement, may also account for the ill will Anne Bullen afterwards bore the cardinal : notwithstanding, upon her second appearance in the royal family, she for some time carried it very fairly towards him ; and wrote him several kind and respectful letters, which are yet to be seen under her own hand.

It is not to be wondered at, that the cardinal's secret enemies at court, should lay hold on so favourable an opportunity as this appeared, to undermine a man, they dare not attempt to be it down ; for it was dangerous meddling with Henry, where his prepossessions were to be removed : they sought Anne Bullen, therefore, (whose aversion to Wolsey they were not unacquainted with) as the properest engine to work with : and an occasion offering shortly after, to remove the minister at a distance from the king, they took care to improve that advantage as the most necessary measure for promoting the success of their designs. In the year 1527 the wars in Italy had been carried to great extremity, the city of Rome was sacked by German soldiers, and Clement the VIIth was actually in captivity to the emperor ; both Henry and his premier expressed great uneasiness at this disaster, and the cardinal, during his seat at the helm, having distinguished himself in several embassies to foreign princes, his foes in the council proposed, that he should be sent ambassador at the present critical juncture, in order to induce the court of France to mediate for the pope's release, as well as to settle some other matters, more immediately relative to the state of the nation.

Whether Wolsey was aware of the plot laid against him, is not certain ; he had undoubtedly an eager desire to serve the Roman pontiff ; and perhaps thought himself too firmly rivited in his master's esteem, to be shaken by

by the cabals of a faction. Be this as it will, on the 11th of July he left London, with a numerous and splendid retinue ; the furniture of the mule on which he himself rode, being richly embroidered with bits and stirrups of massy gold. But to give a circumstantial account of this transaction, would afford very little entertainment to the reader, who may find it at large in all our English histories : we shall only say therefore, that the cardinal at this time concluded a most advantageous treaty with France ; that he was entertained on the Continent with a magnificence hardly to be paralleled ; and that having staid on his embassy about two months, he returned home, where, in spight of the endeavours of his enemies in his absence, he was received by the king with the warmest marks of love and approbation.

After this embassy, the king's attachment to him seemed to increase ; for, besides acknowledging the great service the cardinal had done in that affair, in a letter under the royal hand and seal, he was pleased to appoint a public thanksgiving on the occasion, going himself with his queen, and great numbers of the nobility and gentry, to St. Paul's church ; and afterwards in grand procession to dine with the cardinal. It was in consequence of this embassy also, that he bestowed Wolsey the rich bishopric of Winchester ; and on the sickness of Clement the VIIth, the legate endeavouring a third time for the triple crown, he backed him so strenuously,

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that there is hardly any doubt to be made of the king's serious inclination to raise him to the popedom ; and had not his holiness, unexpectedly, recovered, it is highly probable that the cardinal of York, would at this time have enjoyed the object of his wishes.

In the same year that Wolsey had passed into France, and not many weeks after his leaving that kingdom, the French king sent ambassadors to Henry, in order to ratify the treaties made between the two crowns. On this occasion, Wolsey took upon him to regulate the reception given to the foreigners, and certainly, if we may credit the report of a person, who was an eye-witness to all that passed during their stay in England, these ambassadors were entertained with a cost and sumptuousness utterly unknown to modern times ; banquets, bailes, tournaments, distinguished every day : but as we began the cardinal's life with giving a description of one of his splendid feasts, we shall here, for the same reasons, describe another, being one of the last efforts of his magnificence and hospitality. It was given to the ambassadors of Francis the First, at Hampton court ; and the cardinal having commanded his purveyors to spare no expence or pains, the appointed day being come, the company assembled about noon, from which time, till that of supper, they hunted in one of the king's parks, within three miles of Hampton ; on their return, which was not till evening, every person was conveyed to a different apartment, each

each being furnished with fire and wine; and no less than two hundred and eighty beds in the whole, where they stayed till they were summoned to the banqueting rooms.

These were all set out in a very splendid manner, being hung with cloth of gold and silver, and having rich lustres descending from the ceilings, with large sconces of silver, gilt with gold, and filled with wax lights, which were fixed against the walls. But the presence chamber exceeded all the rest; where was fixed a sumptuous canopy, under which was the table placed by itself for the cardinal; here were the great bouffets and side-boards loaded with gold and silver plate, which cast such a brightness by the reflection of the tapers, as was quite astonishing: here also the gentlemen of the cardinal's household, richly dressed, waited to serve, and all things thus prepared, the trumpets being sounded, the guests came in to supper; which consisted of such abundance, both of different meats and cookery, as surprised the French ambassadors, who were so charmed with the splendor of what they saw, and the sweetness of the music they heard playing on every side of them, that they seemed wrapt (says Cavendish) in heavenly paradise.

Now all this time the cardinal was absent; but on the appearance of the second course, he suddenly came in among them booted and spurred; all the company attempted to rise: but his eminency desiring they would keep their places, he sat down at his own table in

his riding dress, as he was, and grew as merry and agreeable as he ever had been known in his life. This second course (Cavendish observes) must have been the finest thing the Frenchmen ever saw ; but the rarest curiosity in it (adds he) at which they all wondered, and indeed was worthy of wonder, were castles, with images in the same, like St. Paul's church for the model of it, where were beasts, birds, fowls, personages most excellently made, some fighting with swords, some with guns, others with crofs-bow, some dancing with ladies, some on horseback with compleat armour, justling with long and sharp spears, and many other strange devices, which I cannot describe. Amongst all I noted, there was a chess board, made of spice-plate, with men of the same, and of good proportion. And because the Frenchmen are very expert at that sport, my lord cardinal gave that same to a French gentleman, commanding that there should be made a good case to convey the same into his country.

Then the cardinal called for a great gold cup filled with wine ; and pulling off his cap, said, “I drink a health to the king my sovereign, and next unto the king your master.” And when he had taken a hearty draught, he desired the principal ambassador to pledge him. And so all the lords pledged the health in order. Thus was the night spent in great harmony and good humour, till many of the company were obliged to be led to their beds ; and

and the next day having stayed to dine with the cardinal, the ambassadors departed towards Windsor, where they were treated, before their going into their own country, in a manner still more magnificent, by the king.

But there is nothing that more plainly shews the good terms on which Wolsey was with his master, after his last return out of France, than the frequent visits Henry paid him at his palace at Hampton-court; which, in the year 1528, was completely finished, and elegantly furnished. His majesty was greatly taken both with the situation, and beauty of the edifice: upon this Wolsey very generously made him a present of it; and the king, highly pleased with the gift, gave him in return his royal palace at Richmond. However, the cardinal, for the little time he remained in power after this, chose Esher-place, one of the houses belonging to the see of Winchester, for his country-residence, which he caused to be repaired and beautified.

Thus we have conducted Wolsey from his birth, to the utmost summit of his fortune; we must now follow him again down the hill, in which, as it generally happens, his progress was much more rapid than in going up, even expeditious as his ascent was.

“ Queen Catherine’s years adding to her
“ temper, which was naturally grave, was
“ now become more distasteful than ever to
“ king Henry; his passion for Anne Bullen
“ too, who finding the love he had for her,
“ managed her attractions with the utmost art
“ of

“ of coquetry, was greatly augmented ; so
“ that fluctuating between the thoughts of a
“ mistress and a wife, Henry was so entangled,
“ that, rather than be disappointed of the
“ one, he resolved to rid himself of the o-
“ ther.” Cardinal Wolsey saw it was in vain
to put this notion out of his head ; not care-
ing therefore to engage too far in so weighty
a business alone, he, with the king’s per-
mission, by his own legantine authority, issued
writs to summon all the bishops, with the
most learned men of both universities, to con-
sult on his majesty’s case ; but these coun-
sellors thinking the point too nice for them
to determine, in the end the pope was applied
to, who, in compliance with the king’s
request, sent cardinal Campeggio into Eng-
land, that he might, in conjunction with
Wolsey, sit in judgment, and decide whether
Henry’s marriage with Catherine was lawful
or not. But first, the king called an assem-
bly of all the great men in the kingdom, both
spiritual and temporal, besides others of in-
ferior degree, and made them a speech, in
which he endeavoured to account for and ex-
cuse the proceedings he was going upon, lay-
ing the great stress upon conscience, and the
dreadful horrors of mind he had suffered ever
since the French ambassadors had questioned
the lady Mary’s legitimacy, which made him
fear that a marriage with his brother’s relict
was by divine law prohibited : however, he
said, he submitted every thing to the wisdom
of the pope’s legates, then arrived in London,
who

who were authorized by his holiness to determine this important cause ; and the measures he was already determined to take being thus artfully prepared, the legantine court was opened on the 21st of June following.

But the circumstances of this famous trial are well known. The queen being a woman of a resolute mind, protested against the legates, as incompetent judges ; she appealed to the king for her conjugal fidelity ; went out of court, and would never return to it more. The legates went on according to the forms of law, though the queen appealed from them to the pope, and excepted both to the place, to the judges, and her lawyers. The king would not suffer the cause to be removed to Rome, and Campeggio left England. But these accidents fell in a regular series ; and many attempts were made to bring the queen to an easy compliance with his majesty's pleasure, though in vain ; from hence it followed, that the public was divided ; some pitied Henry, but more had compassion for Catherine : and as Wolsey had now brought himself by his pride into universal odium with the people, while the abettors of the divorce charged all the difficulties laid in its way to his artifice ; the partizans on the other side were as unanimous in condemning him, for prompting his master to so iniquitous a piece of violence : but of this last charge the cardinal fully cleared himself, by calling on king Henry, in open court, to witness to his innocence ; when the king declared,

clared, he had always advised him against it, which indeed he might do with a safe conscience ; and for that reason he was jealous of Wolsey's being a secret mover in the protraction of the cause ; for which he consigned him to destruction : Fisher and Ridley, two eminent bishops, being brought to the block principally on the same account.

Indeed it was apparent, on the breaking up of the court, that Wolsey had nothing favourable to expect from that quarter ; for the duke of Suffolk, by the king's direction, coming towards the bench where Wolsey and Campeggio sat, he cried, with a haughty tone and furious countenance, " It was never thus in England till we had cardinals among us." To which the cardinal of York soberly replied ; " Sir, of all men in this realm you have the least cause to dispraise cardinals ; for if I, poor cardinal, had not been, you should not at this present have had a head upon your shoulders." We must observe in this place, that what greatly tended to render Wolsey so hateful to the nobility, was the part he had acted in the year 1521, in regard to the duke of Buckingham, the first nobleman for family and fortune in the kingdom ; who having been so unhappy as to drop some expressions reflecting on the minister's conduct, was never left till he had paid for his indiscretion at the expence of his life, being executed on Tower-hill on the 17th of May, for a crime trumped up against him purely to satisfy the malice of his haughty and revengeful enemy.

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But, to return to the king ; on the avocation of his cause to Rome, he was not only enraged, but afflicted : and Hall, Stow, Rapin, and Burnet, affirm, that he resolved on a progress into the country, thereby to dispel his melancholy : for that end he set out, attended by his royal retinue ; and coming to Grafton in Northamptonshire, he was there attended by Wolsey and Campeggio, the latter of which came to take his leave before he returned into Italy. This was on a Sunday ; and there were many wagers laid among the courtiers, that the king would not speak to the cardinal of York. But here his foes were disappointed : the king not only spoke to him, but received him with a smiling countenance : and having talked to him some time aside at the window, he said, “ Go to your dinner, and take my lord cardinal to keep you company, and after dinner I will talk with you farther.” With which words Henry retired to dine with Anne Bullen, who was with him in his progress, and the cardinals sat down at a table prepared in the presence-chamber for them, and other lords. There is something curious in the account which Cavendish gives us, from one of the persons, who waited at table, of the king and his mistress’s discourse at dinner ; it referred to Wolsey ; and Anne Bullen being as angry as she durst at the king’s gracious behaviour to him, she said, “ Sir, Is it not a marvellous thing, to see into what great debt and danger he hath brought you with all your subjects ?”

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How so, replied the king. Forsooth, said she, there is not a man in all your whole realm of England to whom he hath not indebted you. Which words she spoke, because the king had formerly, through the cardinal's advice, raised money on the people by way of loan, which had been a very unpopular measure ; but the king exculpated his minister, by saying, “ Well, well, for that matter there was no blame in him ; for I know it better th' n you, or any else.” Nay, but (cried the lady) besides that, what exploits hath he wrought in several parts of this realm ? There is never a nobleman, but, if he had done as much as he hath done, were well worthy to lose his head ; nay, if my lord of Norfolk, my lord of Suffolk, or my father, had done much less, they should have lost their heads ere this. “ Then I perceive (said the king) you are none of my lord cardinal's friends.” Why, Sir, (answered she) I have no cause, nor any that love you ; no more hath your grace, if you did well consider his indirect and unlawful doings. During this conversation in the king's chamber, the cardinal was not treated with much less asperity by the duke of Norfolk without ; so that every hand appeared ready to pull down a falling favourite, though the king consulted with him four hours that same evening, which vexed many ; but, at night, when the cardinal's servants came to prepare a lodging for him, they were told there was no room : so that his eminency was obliged to lie at the house

house of one Mr. Empston, at some distance in the country ; and in the morning, when he came to court (tho' he had his majesty's command to attend him over night) he found the king just ready to mount his horse, who, without taking any further notice, coldly ordered him to consult with the lords of the council. This was contrived by Anne Bulien, who rode out with the king ; and in order to prevent his majesty's return before the cardinal went away, she took care to provide an entertainment for him at Hanwell-park.

The king had no sooner left Wolsey in this abrupt manner, than the cardinal saw there was an end of all ; but he was too wise to expose himself to the taillery of the courtiers, by appearing humbled or terrified at his approaching disgrace. Immediately after dinner he set out with his colleague for London, from whence, in a few days, Campeggio took his journey to Rome. But a report prevailing, that in his baggage he had concealed, and was carrying off, a considerable treasure belonging to the cardinal of York, the custom-house officers, by the king's order, stopt him at Dover, and made so thorough a search, that the legate complained of the insult offered his character, though to no other purpose than to receive a rebuke from the king, for daring to assume any character in his dominions, without his particular licence ; so that the Italian prelate was glad to get off un molested at any rate : as for Wolsey, though he had the king's commission for acting as legate

in England, that was afterwards brought against him, among a number of other crimes, very little better founded; and such was the king's eagerness to begin with him, that he had scarce patience to wait till Campeggio set sail.

It was now term-time, and Wolsey, the first day, went to the court of chancery, in his usual state, but after that, never sat there more. On the 18th of October 1529, the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk came to his house at Westminster, and in the king's name, demanded the great seal: at the same time, letting him know, that he should immediately depart to his seat at Esher. However, he told their lordships, that he held the place of chancellor by patent for life; and that as he had received the seal from his majesty's own hands, into those alone he would deliver it. The noblemen were extremely offended at this refusal, but the chancellor was positive: however, the dukes coming again the next day, with a peremptory command to the cardinal, to obey his majesty without the least delay, he at last consented; though not without some tart reflections on their graces conduct, who, with good grounds, were suspected to have a great hand in his ruin.

The fatal business being thus commenced, the cardinal proceeded with great coldness and submission; he called all his officers before him, and had an immediate inventory taken of every thing he was worth; and the several moveables being brought out and set in a great

great gallery, and the chamber adjoining, he left them all for the king. Indeed his treasury resembled that of an Eastern monarch, rather than an European subject; for, in the first place, there were set in the gallery several tables, on which were piled an infinite variety of rich stuffs, with cloths and silks of all colours and manufactures; there were a thousand pieces of holland; and all the hangings of his great rooms, were gold and silver arras; with the most magnificent robes and coats, that he had bought for the use of his two colleges at Oxford and Ipswich: but these were trifles to what was to be seen in his chambers: there were set very large tables, wholly covered with plate, a great part of which was solid gold, all the rest of his goods and furniture bearing an equal proportion; so that it is not improbable that his known opulence was no small inducement to the persecution against him. All things thus settled, he prepared to withdraw to Esher; but just as he was going, Sir William Gascoigne, his treasurer, came up, and told him, it was rumoured abroad, that he was to go directly to the Tower: to which the cardinal replied, with some dissatisfaction at Sir William's credulity, and unkindness, in telling him every light story, adding "that he had done nothing to deserve imprisonment, but, having received all he possessed of the king, it was but reasonable he should return it to him again."

He then took boat, having with him most of his servants, with some furniture and provisions, and directed his course toward Putney. Upon this occasion the Thames was crowded with spectators on both sides, and a vast number of boats appeared on the river, in hopes of seeing the cardinal carried to the Tower; and it is almost incredible to tell what joy the common people expressed, on that occasion, who in prosperity followed him with applause and blessings. Being landed at Putney, his immediate mounted his mule, his servants and attendants being on horseback; but he was scarce got to the foot of the hill, on the other side of the town, when he was overtaken by Sir John Norris, one of the gentlemen of the bed-chamber, who dismounted his horse, and saluting his eminence in his majesty's name, told him "he was sent express to assure him, that he was as much in the king's favour as ever: that this disgrace was only to serve a turn, and please some sort of people; bidding him be of good courage, for, as his majesty was able, so he was willing, to make up all his losses." The cardinal being surprized at this joyful news, directly got off his mule, and falling upon his knees in the dirty highway, he betrayed an extravagance of transport at the appearance of returning to favour, quite unbecoming a man; he pulled off his hat, praised the king's goodness, and embraced Sir John Norris over and over; after which, being again mounted, and riding towards Esher, as they conversed on

on the way, Norris pulled out a gold ring set with a very rich stone, which he presented to the cardinal in the king's name, in token of his recovered friendship; and Wolsey, in return, taking a gold cross from about his neck, in which a piece of the Holy Cross, (as it was said) was inclosed, bestowed it on Sir John, as a perpetual remembrance of his service. Then, bethinking himself of what would be acceptable to the king, he sent him his fool, Patch, whom six of his tallest yeomen were scarce able to conduct, so great a reluctance he had to part with his old master; but with this present the king appeared very much pleased.

But after all these great promises from the king, it appears that nothing was meant by them; for the cardinal no sooner reached his retreat, than he was intirely neglected, being suffered to continue there three weeks without either beds, tablecloths, or dishes to eat his meat upon, neither had he money to buy any; so that he must infallibly have perished, had it not been for the supplies the country people sent to him. In these sad circumstances his secretary one day told him, that he ought in conscience to consider him and his other servants, who had never forsook him, in weal or woe, "Alas! Tom," said the cardinal, "you know I have nothing to give you nor them; which makes me both ashamed and sorry." After which, by his secretary's advice, borrowing some money of his chaplains, many of whom he had preferred to great benefices, he

had all his servants called up before him, and beholding them for some time with great tenderness, whilst his silence, and the tears that ran down his cheeks, testified his inward affliction ; at length, perceiving his servants also weep very plentifully, he made them a most moving speech ; in which he lamented that he had not done so much for them, in his prosperity, as he might have done ; tho' he excused himself by the great promptness that there might be in people, to say, there was no office would escape the rapacity of the cardinal : he then deplored his present situation, which had left him nothing but the bare cloathes upon his back, so that he was without any means of acknowledging their services : however, he thanked them all heartily, and giving them their wages, and his blessing, told them they had better provide for themselves. After this most of his servants left him, except Cavendish, who stayed about his person, and Cromwell, who went to London, to take care of his affairs there.

It was now the cardinal began to find out, in spite of specious pretences, how little, in reality, the king was his friend ; for, from the vigorous proceedings commenced against him at law, it was apparent that his majesty resolved to have him at his mercy, upon the statute of premunire, though it appeared to every one, that, to let the law loose upon him, would be the greatest injustice, in as much as he was authorized by the king to execute his legantine commission : yet, at the impos-

importunity of several lords of the council, he declined pleading to the information exhibited against him, and threw himself entirely on the king's mercy, who, he said "had a conscience to judge and understand how far he merited punishment for the matter alledged against him;" then judgment was signed. However, he received assurances from Henry, that he would not proceed to the utmost rigour of the law, and soon after he had part of his goods given to him, and obtained a protection from the king; but still diligent enquiry was making after all his estate and effects, and whenever any was found, they were immediately confiscated to his majesty's use.

It seems to us a hard matter to reconcile the different parts of Henry's behaviour in discarding his minister; he found he was no longer his creature, perhaps, and therefore he ceased to be his favourite: and yet he seems to have been ashamed of the part he was acting against a man whom he once so highly favoured, by letting him down with a seeming reluctance, and qualifying every step he fell with some act of pretended tenderness and compassion. Thus in the parliament which was called on the third of November, after Wolsey's disgrace, when the lords exhibited four and forty articles of impeachment against him, and the bill (through the management of the cardinal's secretary) was rejected in the lower house, the king expressed great satisfaction at it; and indeed all the articles were built on so weak, and many of them upon so unjust,

unjust, a foundation, that my lord Herbert might well say, no minister was ever displaced with less to alledge against him. In some of these articles it was made a capital offence to have done several things which he did by the king's express command, and under his licence ; while others carried an air of ridiculousness and absurdity : and even those which bore the best face, contained, at the utmost, but trifles, and errors rather than crimes. But though this ill-supported charge fell to the ground ; nay, though the king, in one of his relenting fits, granted him the most ample pardon for all crimes which he might be supposed to have committed against the crown, that ever king granted a subject ; the cardinal's ill fortune still continued to pursue him with accumulated rigor ; nor would his hard-hearted master be satisfied, while he had any thing left, that it was possible to wring from him.

Henry insisted upon his signing a resignation of York-house, and he was obliged to do it. He also forced him to make over by deed of gift the revenues of the bishoprick of Winchester, and, after all, would not so much as pay his debts, nor allow him sufficient to subsist upon ; so that, with one vexation or other, Wolsey was at length quite harrassed out, and he fell dangerously ill of a violent fever. But the cardinal's indisposition was no sooner mentioned at court, than the king expressed the greatest concern and uneasiness ; he declared he would not lose him

him for twenty thousand pounds ; ordered one of his own physicians to attend him ; and being told, that nothing was so likely to promote a recovery, as some mark of favour from the royal hand, he not only sent him a ring with his own picture in it, from himself, but made Anne Bullen take the gold etwee from her side, and, with many obliging expressions, entreated the cardinal's acceptance of it, as a token of her esteem and affection. Yet Wolsey was no sooner up again, than the prospect grew as gloomy as ever : the king dissolved both his colleges, though in the humblest and most earnest manner he besought him to spare them : and the cardinal having, in his prosperity, at a great expence, built himself a tomb, which was not finished at the time of his fall, his majesty seized that too ; nor would he be prevailed on to restore it, though his old favourite begged it of him in the moving term of a burying place, which, "on account of his great heaviness, he said, "he was soon likely to want." However, the king was not so inflexible to all his requests ; for the cardinal representing about this time, that the air of Esher was very prejudicial to his constitution, he was immediately permitted to remove to Richmond, and a sum of money was issued from the Treasury to make his circumstances a little more easy.

His removal to Richmond made his enemies very uneasy ; they disliked such a proximity to the court, and were in continual fear, lest Henry should relapse into his former attachment,

ment, and, one time or other, call his discarded minister again into favour. In these thoughts they determined to move him to a greater distance; and considering his province in the north as the properest place for his future residence, they found no great difficulty in procuring an order from Henry for his immediately repairing thither. The poor cardinal would fain have retired no further than Winchester, but no place but Yorkshire would do; and on his being a little tardy to set out, on account of money which he waited for, and because there was no exact time fixed for his journey, the duke of Norfolk one day meeting his secretary Cromwell, said to him, "Go, tell thy master, that unless he quickly removes towards the north, I will tear him to pieces with my teeth;" which being repeated to the cardinal, "Then," cried he, "it is time for me to be going," and accordingly he left Richmond in a few days after, taking the road for his archiepiscopal seat at Cawood.

No sooner was he arrived and settled in this place, than he gave himself up entirely to devotion and his pastoral charge, daily distributing to the poor, and keeping an hospitable table for all comers. His custom was, to visit all the little parish churches round about, in which one of his chaplains generally preached, and sometimes he condescended to dine at an honest farmer's house, where he was constantly surrounded with a great number of indigent people, whom he conversed with, and

and relieved. Finding his palace also very much out of repair, he at one time engaged above three hundred workmen and labourers in fitting it up: but such was the malignity of his enemies at court, that they interrupted this to his disadvantage, Cromwell writing to him in one of his letters from London,

“ Somethere be that do alledge your grace
“ keeps too great a house and family, and
“ that you are continually building: for the
love of God, therefore, have respect, and
“ refrain.”

In consequence of this admonition, the cardinal began to contract his manner of living: but his enemies, who were resolved on his destruction, soon found something else to lay hold of, in the great preparations which, contrary to his warmest intreaties, and, in some measure, without his knowledge, the dean and chapter of his cathedral church were making for his solemn installation; insomuch, that for a week before the day fixed for that ceremony, people from all parts of the kingdom crowded, out of curiosity, to the city of York.

Cavendish tells us the following story upon this occasion. “ On All Saints day, the cardinal being at dinner with his chaplains, doctor Augustine, a physician, cloathed with a very heavy velvet gown, in rising up, pushed against the cardinal’s silver cross, placed at the corner of the table, which fell so heavy upon the head of doctor Bonner, that the blood came trickling down. Upon this the cardinal

cardinal immediately retired to his chamber, and shaking his head, said, “Malum omen,” a bad sign; which he afterwards interpreted to Cavendish upon his death-bed, telling him, that the cross represented his person; doctor Augustine, who threw it down, his enemy, and an informer; and the chaplain being wounded, importuned, that his power was at an end, and death would quickly ensue.” This, no doubt, will be called superstition; however, it is certain, that his enemies had preferred against him a new accusation of high treason; and, on the very day this accident happened, Sir Walter Walch, one of the gentlemen of the king’s bed-chamber, set out from court, to attend lord Piercy, (then earl of Northumberland by his father’s death) who, through an old grudge, very readily accepted a commission to assist in arresting the cardinal; this matter being conducted so secretly, that Cromwell, who was in London, had not the least suspicion of it; nor was the affair known in the country, till on the Friday which preceded the designed installation, when Sir Walter Walch, with the noble earl abovementioned, arrived at Caewood, attended by several horsemen, and others, whom they had commanded in the king’s name to follow them.

Alighting at the cardinal’s gate, they went immediately into the hall, and demanded the keys from the porter: but the man, astonished at this request, refused to deliver them without his master’s order. To prevent any further

ther disturbance, therefore, they contented themselves with taking an oath from him, "That no person should go out or come in, " till he received further orders;" the cardinal all this while remaining ignorant of what passed below, care being taken that no one should go up to inform him: however, at last one of the servants found means to slip b., and told his eminency that the earl of Northumberland was in the hall. Wolsey being then at dinner, took this for a friendly visit from his old pupil, and immediately rose from table; but meeting the earl on the top of the stairs, after a mutual embrace, Northumberland said, trembling, "I arrest you " of high treason." Upon this the cardinal demanded to see his authority; but the earl refusing to shew his commission, Wolsey, with great presence of mind, replied, "I will not " then submit to your arrest :" however, Sir Walter Walch coming up during the debate, whom the cardinal knew, and repeating what the earl had before said, he very readily surrendered himself.

Being now in custody, Saturday was spent in packing up some of his effects, and preparing for his journey; but, as soon as the country people were informed of what the earl and Walch had been doing, the palace was surrounded by a great number of persons, who made the air ring with repeated cries, "May " the foul evil overtake them, who are taking " him from us!" And there they continued waiting, in order to see the cardinal carried

away, that they might take their mournful farewell of him ; which gave Northumb~~ers~~ and and the knight no little uneasiness.

On Sunday, the first of November, early in the morning, he proceeded on his journey towards London. As soon as he came out of his gate, the people with great lamentation expressed their concern, and followed him for several miles, till the cardinal desired them to depart, and be patient ; for that he feared not his enemies, but entirely submitted to the will of Heaven. The first night he lodged at Pontefret Abby ; the next night, with the Black Friars at Doncaster ; and the night following, at Sheffield Park, where he remained eighteen days. Here he was kindly entertained by the earl of Shrewsbury, and had great respect shewed him by the neighbouring gentlemen, who flocked in to visit him : but being one day at dinner, he was taken very ill with a sudden coldness at his stomach ; which he apprehending to be an oppression occasioned by wind, he immediately sent to an apothecary for some medicine to expel it, and this gave him ease for the present ; but if he was not then poisoned, as some people imagined, either by himself or others, it appears that this disorder, from whatever root it sprung, was the cause of his death, he being in so languishing a condition when Mr. Kingston, the lieutenant of the Tower, came to the earl of Shrewsbury's, to take him into custody, and attend him to London, that he was hardly able to walk across the chamber. This circumstance too of being put

put into the hands of the lieutenant of the Tower, gave a great stroke to his weakened frame ; for when the earl of Shrewsbury ordered Cavendish to tell him of Kingston's arrival, in the tenderest manner, that he might take it quietly, and without apprehension, the cardinal clapped his hands on his thigh, and gave a great sigh, saying, " I now see what is preparing for me."

At this, Kingston was introduced, who immediately fell on his knees to the cardinal, and saluted him in the king's behalf. But Wolsey, as well as his feeble state would let him, took off his hat, and stooped to raise him up, saying, " Master Kingston, I pray you stand up, and leave your kneeling to me, for I am a wretch replete with misery, esteeming myself but a mere object, utterly cast away, though without desert, God he knoweth ; therefore, good master Kingston, stand up." Then the lieutenant assured him that his majesty had still an entire affection for him ; but he could not help bringing him to his trial, such was the importunity of his enemies ; though the king did not in the least question but he was able to clear himself, and would come off with honour ; that his orders were to permit him to set out for London when he thought proper, and to take what time he pleased upon his journey. To this the cardinal replied, " I have a distemper which will not permit me to make very much haste ; however, I will endeavour to be ready for the journey to-morrow morning." But hav-

ing at that time a lax, it increased so violently in the night, that he went to stool ~~near~~ fifty times, which obliged him to remain there the next day. However, though still very sick, he left the earl of Shrewsbury's the following morning, and, by gentle progress, reached another seat of his lordship's that night.

It had been the opinion of the physicians, before he quitted Shefield Park, that he had not above four or five days to live; but ~~the~~ ^{the} King ~~the~~ seems to have thought, that his malady was not so grievous as it was represented. It must be owned, that the cardinal behaved in this last stage with great patience and resignation: though scarce able to sit his mule, he rode along without complaining; and being attended by a guard who had formerly been his own servants, and now beheld their master with an eye of sorrow and compassion, all the way as he went, he kept talking, sometimes with one, and sometimes with another, taking them by the hand and using much kindness. Thus he continued three days making short journeys, by slow progress, till on the third at night he arrived at Leicester Abbey. Here the abbot and the whole convent came out to meet him, receiving him in the court with great reverence and respect; but the cardinal only said, "Father Abbot; " I am come to lay my bones among you;" and riding still on his mule, till he came to the stairs of his chamber, he with much difficulty was helped up, and put to bed.

This

This was on Saturday, the 25th of November, and on the Monday following his illness was so far increased, that it was the general opinion of all his attendants, he could not live long. On Tuesday morning early, Mr. Kingston went into his room, and asked him how he rested: the cardinal devoutly answered, "I only wait the pleasure of Heaven to render my poor soul into the hands of my Creator." The cardinal after this, being about the space of an hour at confession, Kingston came to him a second time, and then Wolsey finding his dissolution very nigh, "I pray you (said he) have me heartily recommended to his royal majesty, and beseech him on my behalf to call to his remembrance all matters that have passed between us from the beginning, especially with regard to his business with the queen; and then will he know in his conscience, whether I have offended him. He is a prince of a most royal carriage, and hath a princely heart; and, rather than he will miss, or want any part of his will, he will endanger the one half of his kingdom. I do assure you, that I have often kneeled before him, sometimes three hours together, to persuade him from his will and appetite, but could not prevail. Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs: but this is the just reward that I must receive. for my indulgent pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only to my

“ prince. Therefore, let me advise you, if
“ you be one of the privy-council, as by your
“ wisdom you are fit, take care what you put
“ into the king’s head; for you can never
“ put it out again.” Adding, after a very
severe warning against the Lutherans, “ Mr.
“ Kingston, farewell; I wish all things may
“ have good success; my time draweth on
“ fast.” Having uttered these words, his
speech failed him, and he died about eight
o’clock, the guards being called in to see him
expire; and thus finished the days of this
great prelate and statesman, Nov. 22, 1630,
being sixty years of age, wanting four months.
After his death he was laid in an oaken cof-
fin, with his face uncovered, that every one
might be permitted to view him; and early
in the morning on St. Andrew’s day, he was
buried in the middle of one of the Abbey
chapels.

As to his person, he was strongly made,
tall, big-boned, and of a majestic presence;
his face was rather comely, but physiognomists
pretend to say, it was stamped with the legi-
ble indications of pride. His character has
been maliciously attacked by some, and as
weakly defended by others; yet undoubtedly
the known violence of Henry the Eighth’s
temper may alleviate much of the blame which
some of his favourite’s measures have under-
gone: and when we consider, that the subse-
quent part of that monarch’s reign was much
more unfortunate and criminal, than that
which was directed by the cardinal’s councils,



S^r. THOMAS MORE

we shall be inclined to suspect those historians of partiality, who have endeavoured to load his memory with such virulent reproaches.

K. B.



THE LIFE OF
SIR THOMAS MORE.

THOSE authors, who are fond of recording wonders, tell us, that the birth of this great man was preceded by several strange dreams, which his mother had during her pregnancy, portending his future fortune; but without paying any regard to the legends of superstition, it may be affirmed, that his childhood afforded the most lively hopes of what his maturer years accomplished. Of this we have a testimony in the behaviour of cardinal Moreton, archbishop of Canterbury, and lord chancellor of England: for young Thomas More being, according to the custom of those times, put into his family for education, ~~his~~ grace would often say to the nobility who dined with him; "This boy, who waits at the table, whosoever lives to see it, will prove a surprising man." But not to dwell too long upon trifles; according to the best accounts, the object of our present enquiry was born Anno Domini 1480, in Milk-street in London,

London ; his father, Sir John More, being then a gentleman of established reputation in the law, in which profession he afterwards brought up his son ; and it appears that Mr. More, on his first entrance on business, cut a very extraordinary figure at the bar ; though taking an early distaste to that way of life, he suddenly retired to the Charter-house ; where, giving himself up entirely to devotion, he remained secluded from the world no less than four years ; and it was probably in this place, he contracted that superstitious attachment to the popish religion, and burning zeal against heretics, which was afterwards the only disfigurement of his character.

But Sir Thomas More was at length tired of being shut up from the commerce of mankind, and all science ; he therefore listened to the entreaties of his friend, Mr. Colt of Newhall in Essex, and, about the year 1500, went to live at his house. This gentleman had three daughters, and, in the course of his visit, Mr. More took a liking to the second ; but it is remarkable, that on being urged by the father to make choice of one of them for a wife, he espoused the eldest, merely for being such, that it might be no vexation or disgrace to her to be passed by. Upon his marriage with this lady, who lived with him about seven years, he took a house in Bucklersbury, and began once again to practice the law. But what greatly contributed to raise his reputation was this : More was not now full two-and-twenty years of age, yet being elected a burgess at a

very

very critical juncture, when Henry VII. called a parliament to demand a subsidy, and nine fifteenths, for the marriage of his eldest daughter, he had an immediate opportunity of displaying his talents in the house: for the majority were against this demand, though many of the members, being afraid of the king's displeasure, made no opposition: upon which our young lawyer got up, and argued with such strength and clearness against so arbitrary an imposition, that his majesty's demand was, in the end, rejected. Mr. Tyler, one of the privy-council, who was present when the speech was made, went immediately to the king, and told him, that a beardless boy had disappointed all his purpose. A prince, tyrannical and avaricious like Henry, could not fail to be much incensed; and we are not to wonder that he should be determined to be revenged on the person who had presumed to oppose the favourite measure of his reign (that of getting money); however, as our patriot had no substance himself, the king was obliged to pretend a quarrel therefore, without any cause, against Sir John, his father, whom he ordered to be imprisoned in the Tower, till he had paid a fine of an hundred pounds. Nor did Mr. More come off so clearly, being obliged to forego his practice, and live in private, till the death of Henry VII.

This retirement, however, was of no real disadvantage to him, as he employed his time in improving himself in history, mathematics, and the belle-lettres; so that when he immersed

merged again from obscurity, he shone with double lustre, what with a place which was given him in the City, and his practice, he gained, without any scruple of conscience, above four hundred pounds a year, which for that time was prodigious. Indeed his reputation as a pleader was become so extremely high, that before his employment by the government, he was twice appointed ambassador, by the consent of Henry VIII. on some causes of consequence, between the English merchants and those of the Steel-yard; upon which cardinal Wolsey was very solicitous to engage More in his majesty's service: but he was so averse to change the condition of an independent man, for that of a courtier, that the minister could not prevail; and the king, for the present, was pleased to admit of his excuses. It happened, however, some time after, that a great ship of the pope's arrived at Southampton, the king claimed it as a forfeiture, upon which the legate demanded a tryal, with council for his holiness, learned in the laws of the kingdom; and, as his majesty was himself a great civilian, he also desired it might be heard in some public place in the royal presence. Henry acceded to all this, and Mr. More was chosen council on the side of the pope; whose cause he pleaded with so much learning and success, that the forfeiture which the crown claimed, was immediately restored, and the conduct of the lawyer universally admired and applauded. Indeed it brought so great an addition to

to his fame, that the king would no longer be induced by any entreaty to dispense with his service, and having no better place at that time vacant, he made him master of the requests, in a month after knighted him, appointed him one of his privy-council, and admitted him into the greatest familiarity with himself.

It was a custom with his majesty, says the author of the British Antiquities, after he had performed his devotions upon holidays, to send for Sir Thomas More into his closet, and there confer with him about astronomy, geometry, divinity, and other parts of learning, as well as affairs of state. Upon other occasions the king would carry him in the night upon his leads, at the top of the house, to be instructed in the variety, course, and motions of the heavenly bodies. But this was not the only use the king made of his new servant. He soon found, that he was a man of a cheerful disposition, and had a great fund of wit and humour: and therefore his majesty, when the council had supped, or were at supper, would order him to be sent for, to make him and the queen merry. When Sir Thomas perceived that they were so much entertained with his conversation, that he could not once in a month get leave to spend an evening with his wife and children, whom he loved, nor be absent from court two days together, without being sent for by the king, he grew very uneasy at this restraint of his liberty; and so beginning, by little and little, to disuse himself

himself from his former mirth, and somewhat to dissemble his natural temper, he was not so ordinarily called for upon these occasions of merriment. The treasurer of the Exchequer dying about this time, the king, without any solicitation, conferred this office on Sir Thomas More ; and within three years after, a parliament being summoned, in order to raise money for a war with France, he was elected speaker of the House of Commons.

During the sessions of parliament of this year 1520, cardinal Wolsey was much offended with the members of the House of Commons, because nothing was said or done there, but immediately it was blown abroad, in every alehouse : on the other hand, the members had an undoubted right, as they thought, to repeat to their friends without doors what had passed within. It happened, however, that a considerable subsidy having been demanded by the king, which Wolsey apprehended would meet with great opposition in the lower house, he was determined to be present when the motion should be made, in order to prevent its being rejected. The house being apprised of his resolution, it was a great while under debate, whether it was best to receive him with a few of his lords only, or with his whole train. The major part of the house inclined to the first : upon which the speaker got up, and said, “ Gentlemen, forasmuch as my lord cardinal hath, not long since, laid to our charge, the lightness of our tongues, it shall not, in my judgment, be amiss to receive

ceive him with all his people ; that so, if he blame us hereafter for things spoken out of the house, we may lay it upon those that his grace shall bring with him." The humour of the speaker's motion being approved, the cardinal was received accordingly. But having shewn, in a solemn speech, how necessary it was for the king's affairs, that the subsidies moved for should be granted, and finding that no member made any answer, nor shewed the least inclination to comply with what he asked, he quite lost his temper ; and with great indignation said, " Gentlemen, unless it be the manner of your house, to express your minds in such cases by your speaker, here is, without doubt, a surprizing obstinate silence." He then required the speaker to give him an answer to the demand which he had made in the king's name. Upon which Sir Thomas having, with great reverence, fallen on his knees, excused their silence, as being abashed at the presence of so exalted a personage. He then proceeded to shew, that it was not agreeable to the ancient liberty of the house, to make an answer to his majesty's messages by any other person, how great soever, than some of their own members ; and in the conclusion, he told his eminence, That though, as speaker, he was the voice of the commons ; yet except every one of them could put their several judgments in his head, he alone, in so weighty a matter, was ~~not~~ able to make a sufficient answer." The cardinal, taking offence at the speaker for this evasive

reply, suddenly rose up and departed: perhaps his displeasure was greater, because he knew that Sir Thomas More had seconded the motion when it was first made: but though that spirited patriot thought the subsidy absolutely necessary for carrying on the war, he had a mind to distinguish between the reasonable demands of the king, and insolence of his minister; and therefore played off this farce against him.

In consequence of this, however, being a few days after in Wolsey's gallery at Whitehall, his eminence complained vehemently of the ill treatment he gave him; and reproaching him for his ingratitudo, said, "Would to God you had been at Rome when I made you speaker." To which Sir Thomas replied, "Your grace not offended, so would I too." And then, to divert him from his ill humour, he began to commend the cardinal's gallery, and said, that he liked it better than his other at Hampton-court: but though he thus put an end to his reproaches, he did not cool his resentment: for afterwards, when the parliament broke up, Wolsey persuaded the king to name him ambassador into Spain, purely with a view of doing him a discourtesy, by sending him into a country which he knew would be disagreeable to him; however, when his majesty mentioned to Sir Thomas the employment he designed him, the knight took the liberty to remonstrate so strongly, yet so modestly against it, that with a candour and condescension not usual to him, Henry was pleased

pleased to admit of his arguments ; assuring him withal, that his meaning was not to hurt, but do him good ; and therefore he would think of some other person for the embassy, and employ him another way. Accordingly, upon the death of Sir R. Wingfield, in the year 1428, Sir Thomas More was appointed chancellor of the dutchy of Lancaster, and at the same time admitted into such an high degree of favour with the king, that his majesty would sometimes come, without giving him any notice, to his house at Chelsea, in order to enjoy his conversation upon common affairs.

He one day made Sir Thomas an unexpected visit of this sort to dinner, and having walked with him in his garden for an hour, with his arm about his neck, it was such a demonstration of kindness and familiarity, that the king being gone, Mr. Roper, one of Sir Thomas's sons in law, could not help observing to him, " How happy he must be, to have his prince distinguish him in so particular a manner." To which Sir Thomas replied, " I thank our lord, son Roper, I find his grace to be my very good master indeed, and I believe that he does as much favour me at present as any subject within this realm ; but yet I may tell thee, son, I have no cause to be proud of it ; for if my head would win him a castle in France (with which kingdom Henry was then at war) it would not fail to be struck off my shoulders."

It was observed of Sir Thomas More, that the ignorant and the proud, even in the highest

station, were those people whom he respected the least ; but, on the other hand, he was a patron and a friend to every man of letter, and held almost a continual correspondence with all the literati in Europe. Among foreigners, Erasmus appears to have had the greatest share in his love and confidence ; and after a series of mutual letters, expressing their esteem for each other ; that divine made a voyage to England, on purpose for the benefit of his conversation.

There is a story told of their first coming together, which would hardly deserve to be recorded, if it was not related to two such eminent men : the person who conducted Erasmus to London, it seems, had so contrived, that Sir Thomas and he should meet, without knowing it, at the lord-mayor's table, in those days open at all times to men of parts and knowledge. When a dispute arising at dinner, Erasmus, in order to display his learning, endeavoured to defend the wrong side of the question ; but he was so sharply opposed by Sir Thomas, that, finding he had to do with an abler man than he ever before met with, he said, in Latin, with some vehemence, " You are either More, or nobody." To which Sir Thomas replied, in the same language, with great vivacity, " You are either Erasmus or the devil." Upon this elucidement, the friends immediately embraced, and afterwards, through the means of Sir Thomas, Erasmus was much caressed by the greatest men in the nation.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

It is remarkable, that of all the servants and favourites Henry the Eighth had, he never treated any with so much tenderness and good humour, as Sir Thomas More. The answer which he made the king on his majesty's desiring his judgment with regard to his marriage with queen Catherine, is well known. Clark and Dunstan, bishops of Bath and Durham, with others of the privy-council, having been ordered to consult with him, "To be plain with your grace", said Sir Thomas, "neither my lord of Durham, nor my lord of Bath, nor myself, nor any of your privy-council, being all your servants, and greatly indebted to your goodness, are in my judgment proper counsellors for your grace upon this point; but, if you please to understand the very truth, you may have such counsellors who, neither for respect of their own worldly profit, nor for fear of your princely authority, will deceive you;" and then he named Jerome, Austin, and several other ancient fathers, producing the opinions he had collected out of them. Notwithstanding the king did not approve of what had passed, Sir Thomas used such discretion in his conversation with his majesty afterwards on this subject, that, self willed as Henry was, he did not take it ill of him, and soon after, intending to proceed no farther in his divorce, he appointed Sir Thomas as one of an embassy to Cambray, in order to negotiate a peace between the Empire and France; in which he procured so much greater advantages to the kingdom

than were thought possible, that, for his eminent services, his majesty afterwards gave him the great seal, and made him lord chancellor, in the room of cardinal Wolsey. Upon his entrance into this office a surprizing charge was seen by every body; for, notwithstanding Wolsey's great abilities, and disinterestedness as a chancellor, yet, such was his pride, that he would scarcely look on any of the common rank, and it was difficult to be admitted into his presence only, without bribing his officers; whereas a man now presided in the court of chancery, who, the meaner his suitors were, the more attentively would he hear the business, and the more readily dispatch it. It is said that one of his sons-in-law, Mr. Dauncy, found fault with him once, between jest and earnest, for this extraordinary condescension; adding "you are so ready to hear every man, poor as well as rich, that there is no getting any thing under you; whereas, were you otherwise, some for friendship, some for kindred, and some for profit, would gladly have my interest to bring them to you. I know I should do them wrong if I took any thing from them, because they might as readily prefer their suits to you themselves; but this, though I think it very commendable in you, yet to me who am your son, I find it not profitable." "You say well son," cry'd the chancellor, "I am glad you are of a conscience so scrupulous, but there are many other ways that I may do good to yourself, and

and pleasure your friends; and this be assured of, upon my faith, that if the parties will call justice at my hands, then, though it were my father, whom I love so dearly, stood on one side, and the devil, whom I hate so extremely, stood on the other, the cause being good, the devil should have it." But as an indubitable proof that Sir Thomas More would not deviate from justice in a smaller matter, for any consideration, the reader may take the following instance. Another of his son's-in-law, Mr. Heron, having a cause depending, was advised to put it into arbitration, but he, presuming on his father's favour, and not agreeing to this proposal, the chancellor, upon hearing the cause, made a decree directly against him: no subpoena was issued, no order granted, but what he saw; and having presided in the court of chancery about two years, such was his application to business, that on a cause being finished, and his calling for the next that was to be heard, he was answered, there was not one cause more depending; which he ordered immediately to be set down on record.

When Sir Thomas More was lord chancellor, his father, Sir John, was one of the oldest judges in the King's-Bench; and it was a very unusual sight in Westminster-Hall, to see two such great seats filled by a father and son at the same time. There was another sight, however, still more surprising; for, if the court of King's-Bench was sitting, when the chancellor came into the Hall, he went first into

that court, and there kneeling down, in the sight of every body, asked his father's blessing ; and when they happened to meet together at the readings in Lincoln's Inn, he always offered the precedence to his father, though, on account of his son's high dignity, Sir John accordingly waved it.

Though living, as we find, much at court, a cheerful man, and a man of business, yet it appears that Sir Thomas More had a different sense of religion upon his mind, from what courtiers and men of business generally have ; we are told, in particular, that it was his constant custom, besides his private prayers, to read the Psalms and Litany with his wife and children ; in a morning ; and every night, to go with his whole family into the chapel, and there devoutly read the Psalms and Collects with them. But because he chose sometimes to retire, even from his family, and sequester himself from the world, he built at some distance from his mansion house, a gallery, library, and chapel, where, as on other days he spent some time in study and devotion, so on Fridays he continued the whole day, employing it in such exercises as he thought might best improve his mind in religious matters. The great offices which he held, and which he always executed with a splendor suitable to their dignity, obliged him to keep many servants ; but he never suffered any of them to be idle, that they might not acquire a habit of sloth, and to keep them from gaming, and other profligate courses,

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of which idleness is the source; yet let not the reader imagine from hence that he was a ~~scar~~ and spleenetic philosopher; on the contrary he was the failest from it in the world, and when he unbended himself from study, as full of pleasantries as any man of his time. He had also his hours of relaxation, which were filled with music, and such other serene amusements; but while at meals, he always kept a person to read, in order to prevent any improper conversation before his domestics; and at the end of the entertainment, he generally asked those who sat with him how they understood such and such passages of the author, that had been read out of, from thence taking occasion to improve and divert the company.

But having proceeded thus far in a panegyric, which truth and justice demanded of us, we must now take the other side of the question, and confess, that, while Sir Thomas was adorned with the gentlest manners, and the purest integrity, he carried his aversion against heterodoxy to such a height, as even did great dishonour to his humanity. Of this we have a shocking example, in the case of an unhappy gentleman, named James Bainham, who, being accused of favouring the sect of reformers, was brought to the chancellor's house; and refusing to discover what heretics he knew of, More ordered him to be whipped in his presence, and afterwards sent him to the Tower, where he himself put him to the torture.

But

But it was not this way alone that Sir Thomas More defended the cause of the Romish faith, he also wthit several virulent books, in opposition to the broachers of the new opinion; which act of zeal was so acceptable to the English clergy, that, being assembled in full convocation, they unanimously agreed to make him a present of four or five thousand pounds (equal to thirty at this day) as a recompence for his holy labours; and the same being raised by a general contribution among them, three bishops were deputed to wait upon him in the name of the whole body, to tendre their warmest acknowledgments for the service he had done the church; and to intreat his acceptance of the testimony she offered of her gratitude. But what was the answer of this great man to these reverend fathers! It would be an injury to give it in any other words than his own. "It is no small comfort to me," said he, "that such wise and learned men^{so} well accepted of my works, but I never will receive any reward for them, but at the hand of God:" and when the bishops, on finding he would not by any means touch the money, desired leave to present it to his family, "Not so, indeed, my lords;" replied he: "I had rather see it all cast into the Thames, than that I, or any of mine, should have a penay of it: for though your lordship's offer is very friendly and honourable to me, yet, I set so much by my pleasure, and so little by my profit, that, in good fai^{ta}, I would not, for a m^{uch}

a much larger sum, have lost the rest of so many nights, as was spent upon these writings: and yet I wish, for all that, upon condition that all heresies were suppressed, that all my books were burnt, and my labour entirely lost." The prelates then saw it was in vain to urge him any farther, so with much reluctance they carried the gold back, and restored to their much astonished brethren the sum every individual had contributed.

It has been asserted by many historians, that Henry gave the great seal to Sir Thomas More, purely with a view of engaging the opinion of so eminent a man in piety and learning, in favour of his divorce from Queen Catherine; for he thought, after bestowing on him such a post, Sir Thomas could not, with decency, refuse it: but if these were really the king's sentiments, he knew very little of the person he had to deal with, and in the end found himself mistaken: Sir Thomas always vowed that he thought the marriage lawful in the sight of God, since it had once received the sanction of the apostolic council; for, tho' he stood the foremost among those who were for abolishing the illegal jurisdiction which the popes exercised in England, he was far from wishing a total rupture with the See of Rome, which he plainly perceived was unavoidable, according to the measures king Henry was then pursuing. All these things considered; Sir Thomas, knowing he must be engaged in them, one way or other, on account of his office, by which means he must

either offend his conscience, or disoblige the king ; from the time matters began to grow to extremity, he never ceased soliciting his great and intimate friend the duke of Norfolk to intercede with his majesty, that he might deliver up the seal, for which, through many infirmities of body, he said he was no longer fit ; and being pressed so often by him to this purpose, the duke at length applied to the king, and obtained permission that the chancellor might resign. But when he waited on Henry for that purpose, the monarch, notwithstanding what he called Sir Thomas's obstinacy with regard to his great affair, expressed much unwillingness to part with so useful a servant ; and, giving him many thanks and commendations, for his excellent execution of a most important trust, assured him, that, in any request he should have occasion to make, which concerned either his interest or his honour, he should always find the crown ready to assist him.

As Sir Thomas More had sustained the office of lord high chancellor, for above two years and a half, with the utmost wisdom and integrity, so he retired from it with an unparalleled greatness of mind ; not being able to defray the necessary expences of his private family, when he had divested himself of that employment. About the time of his resignation, died, in a very advanced age, his father, Sir John More, whom he often visited and comforted in his illness, and to whom he expressed the most filial affection in his last moments,

ments. This was an event, however, which brought him a very inconsiderable increase of fortune, because the greatest part of his father's estate was settled upon his second wife, who out-lived Sir Thomas many years. When he had delivered up the great seal, he wrote an apology for himself, in which he declared to the public, that all the revenues and pensions he had by his father, his wife, or his own purchase, except the manors given him by the king, did not amount to the value of fifty pounds a year. Strange it will appear in this age, that a privy counsellor, who had filled so many great offices for above twenty years, and had been all his life a frugal man, should not have been able to purchase an hundred pounds per annum. But such was this excellent man's charity, and such his contempt of money, that in all that time, he never hoarded a six-pence.

The day after he quitted the chancellorship, which his own family knew nothing of, he went as usual to Chelsea Church, with his wife and daughter, and after mass was over (it being customary for one of his gentlemen to go to his lady, to tell her the chancellor was gone out of church) he went himself to the pugh door, and making her a low bow, said, "Madam, my lord is gone." But she knowing his humour, took very little notice of this: however, as they were walking home, he told her how matters really stood, and she, finding he was in earnest, and being a worldly-minded woman, cried, in her accustomed manner,

manner, “ Tilly vally, what will you do Mr. More? Will you sit and make coslings in the coals? What, is it not better to rule than to be ruled?” But to divert the ill humour which he saw she was in, he began to find fault with her dress, which she chiding her daughters for not seeing, and they affirming there was no fault to be found, he replied with great mirth, “ Don’t you perceive that your mother’s nose is somewhat awry?” upon which, she went from him in a passion. Perhaps this may seem a trifling story in the life of so great a man, but the reader is to remember that the characters of men are best learned from trifles.

The first thing he set about after the surrender of his office, was to provide places for all his gentlemen and servants among the nobility and bishops, that they might not be sufferers by him. This being done to his satisfaction, he next, being no longer able to bear their expences as he used to do, disposed of his children in their own houses, lessening his family by degrees, till he could get it within the bounds of his small income, making, at the utmost, but a little above one hundred pounds a year. Nor had he, after his debts were paid, an hundred pounds in gold and silver upon earth, his chain and a few rings excepted.

The prepossession which Sir Thomas had, for a long time, entertained of the fate that at last befel him, is very extraordinary; and indeed, through his knowledge of the cruel, inconstant

inconstant temper of the king, this is said to have been so strong, that he frequently foretold what would happen to his wife and children: nay, he once hired a pursuivant to come suddenly to his house, whilst he was at dinner, and, knocking hastily at the door, summon him to appear before the council the next day, which he did in order to arm his family against the calamities which he found approaching. But his first troubles began on account of a female impostor, called the Holy Maid of Kent.

This woman affirmed, that she had revelations from God, to give the king warning of his wicked life, and the abuse of the authority committed to him. In a journey to the Nuns of Sion, she called on Sir Thomas More, and declaring her pretended revelations to him, he was brought in, by the king's direction, as an accomplice with her. He justified himself, however, as to all the intercourse he had with her, in several letters to secretary Cromwell; in which he said, he was convinced she was the most false dissembling hypocrite that had ever been known. But this availed him nothing, the king being highly incensed against him for not approving the divorce, and his second marriage; and when Sir Thomas desired to be admitted into the House of Commons to make his own defence against the bill, his majesty would not consent to it, but assigned a committee of council to hear him. However, the chief point intended was to prevail on him, by fair words

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or threatenings, to give a publick ascent to the king's measure ; to which purpose the lord chancellor Audley made a great parade of his majesty's extraordinary love and favour to Sir Thomas : but the worthy knight, not to be shaken, after assuring the committee of the just sense he had of the king's goodness to him, told them, “ That he had hoped he should never have heard any more of that business, since he had, from the beginning, informed his majesty of his sentiments with regard to it ; and the king accepted them not ungraciously, promising, that he should never be molested farther about it. But, however, he had found nothing, since the first agitation of the matter, to persuade him to change his mind ; if he had, it would have given him a great deal of pleasure.” Then the lords proceeded to threaten him, telling him it was his majesty's commands they should inform him, he was the most ungrateful and traitorous subject in the world ; adding, that he had been the means of his majesty's publishing a book, in which he had put a sword in the pope's hand to fight against himself. This was Henry's famous book against Luther ; but Sir Thomas clearing himself of this charge also, and protesting he had always found fault with those parts of the book, which were calculated to raise the power of the pope, and that he had objected against them to his majesty, the lords, not being able to make any reply to his vindication, broke up the committee ; Mr. Roper, seeing Sir Thomas extremely

extremely cheerful at his return, asked him if his name was struck out of the bill of attainder, that he was in such good spirits. "I have forgotten that," said the knight; "but, if you would know the reason of my mirth, it is, that I have given the devil a foul fall to-day; and gone so far with these lords, that without great shame indeed, I can never go back."

As the duke of Norfolk and secretary Cromwell, had a high esteem for Sir Thomas, they used their utmost efforts to dissuade the king from proceeding on the bill of attainder; assuring him, that they found the upper house were fully determined to hear him in his own defence, before they would pass it; and, if his name was not struck out, it was much to be apprehended, that the bill would be rejected. But the king was too haughty to submit to a subject, with whom he had entered the lists, and too vindictive in his temper to forgive a man who had been his favourite, and yet had dared to offend him: therefore, after talking in a very high strain, he said, that he would be present himself in the house when the bill should pass; thinking, no doubt, that the parliament stood so much in awe of him, that the lords would not then dare to reject it. The committee of council, however, differed from him herein; and out of the personal friendship they had for Sir Thomas More, finding that nothing else would moderate the obstinacy and vehemence with which he pursued this point, they fell on their knees,

knees, and besought him to forbear ; telling him, “ That if it should be carried against him in his own presence, as they believed it would be, it would encourage his subjects to despise him, and be a dishonour to him also all over Europe. They did not doubt but they should be able to find out something else against Sir Thomas, wherein they might serve his majesty with some success ; but in this affair of the Nun he was universally accounted so innocent, that the world thought him worthier of praise, than of reproof.” With these suggestions, especially that of finding something else against him, they at last subdued the king’s obstinancy ; and the name of Sir Thomas More was struck out of the bill.

But as it was now publickly known, that he was as much out of favour with the king, as he had been in his good graces before, accusations poured in against him from every quarter ; and then it was, that he found the peculiar advantage of his innocence and integrity. For, if he had not always acted with the highest probity, so that in all the offices which he went through, he kept himself clear of every sort of corruption, the most trivial matter would have been laid to his charge, in order to crush him. Of this we have an instance in the case of one Parnell, who complained, that he had made a decree against him in the court of Chancery, at the suit of Vaughan his adversary, for which he had received (Vaughan being confined at home with the gout) from the hands of his wife, a great gilt

cup, as a bribe. Upon this accusation, he was brought before the council by the king's direction; and being charged by the witness with the fact, he readily owned, that as that cup was brought him for a new-year's gift, long after the decree was made, he had not refused to take it.

The lord Wiltshire, father to queen Anne, who prosecuted the suit against him, and who hated him for not consenting to the king's marriage with her, was transported with joy to hear him own it, and cried hastily out, "Lo! my lords, did I not tell you, that you should find the matter true?" Sir Thomas then desired, that, as they had with indulgence heard him tell one part of the tale, so they would impartially hear the other: and this being granted, he declared, "That though, after much solicitation, he had indeed received the cup, and it was long after the decree was made, yet he had ordered his butler to fill it immediately with wine, of which he directly drank to Mrs. Vaughan; and, when she had pledged him in it, then as freely as her husband had given it to him, even so freely he gave the same to her again, to present unto her husband for his new-year's gift; and which she received, and carried back again, though with some reluctance." The truth of this, the woman herself, and others then present, deposed before the council, to the great confusion of the lord Wiltshire, and to the disappointment of all his other enemies.

In a parliament which was called in 1534, among many other acts which tended to abrogate the papal power, there was one to declare the king's marriage with Catherine against the law of God, confirming the sentence against it, notwithstanding any dispensation to the contrary; and establishing the succession to the crown of England in the issue of his majesty's present marriage with queen Anne. There was a clause in this act, That if any person, should divulge any thing to the slander of this marriage, or of the issue begotten in it, or, being required to swear to maintain the contents of this act, refuse it, that they should be adjudged for misprison of treason, and suffer accordingly: and, before the two houses broke up, that they might set a good example to the king's other subjects, all the members took the oath relating to the succession; after which, commissioners were sent all over the kingdom, to administer it to the people of every rank and denomination.

In a short time after the breaking up of the parliament, there was a committee of the cabinet-council at Lambeth, consisting of the archbishop, the lord-chancellor Audley, and secretary Cromwell; where several ecclesiastics, but no other layman than Sir Thomas More, were cited to appear, and take the oath. Sir Thomas being called, and the oath tendered to him under the great seal, he desired to see the act of succession which enjoined it; and this being also shewed him, he said, "That he would blame neither those

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who had made the act, nor those who had taken the oath; but, for his own part, though he was willing to swear to the succession, in a form of his own drawing, yet the oath which was offered, was so worded, that his conscience revolted against it, and he could not take it with safety to his soul." He offered, however, to swear to the succession of the crown in the issue of the king's present marriage; because he thought the parliament had a right to determine that matter. Mr. secretary Cromwell, who tenderly favoured him, and who knew the consequence of this debate, when he perceived that Sir Thomas could not be prevailed on to take the oath as it was tendered, saw that his ruin would become inevitable; and, in his great anxiety, protested with an oath, "That he had rather his only son should have lost his head, than that Sir Thomas More should have refused to swear to the succession;" and the conference ending in this manner, he was committed to the custody of the abbot of Westminster for four days; during which, the king and his council deliberated, what course it was best to take with him. Several methods were proposed, but Henry would listen to none of them; and, in the end, Sir Thomas More was committed prisoner to the Tower, and indicted on the statutes.

It would be unnecessary to give a particular detail of all the little circumstances, whilst he remained a prisoner in the Tower, which tended to shew the patience and greatness of mind

mind of this extraordinary man: they are many, and various; let one conversation with his lady, who had leave to visit him after he had been some months confined, suffice. As she had not the magnanimity, and probably not so good an heart, she remonstrated with much petulance, "That he who had been always reputed so wise a man, should now so play the fool, as to be content to be shut up in a close filthy prison with rats and mice, when he might enjoy his liberty and the king's favour, if he would but do as all the bishops and other learned men had done: and as he had a good house to live in, his library, his gallery, his garden, his orchard, and all other necessaries, handiome about him, where he might enjoy himself with his wife and children, she could not conceive what he meant by tarrying so quietly in this imprisonment." He heard her very patiently, and then asked her in his facetious manner, "Whether that house was not as nigh to heaven as his own?" which she resenting, he added very seriously, "That he saw no great cause for so much joy in his house, and the things about it, which would so soon forget its master, that, if he were under ground but seven years, and came to it again, he should find those in it, who would bid him be gone, and tell him it was none of his. Besides, his stay in it was so uncertain, that as he would be but a bad merchant, who would put himself in danger to lose eternity, for a thousand years; so how much

much more, if he was not sure to enjoy it one day to an end?"

Sir Thomas had now been a prisoner in the Tower above a year, and the king had tried every expedient to procure his approbation of his divorce, and second marriage, that he might avail himself of the example of a man famous for his wisdom, learning, and religion, but in vain: the knight had espoused the cause of queen Catherine, upon a principle of conscience, and therefore he always withstood Henry upon that point with a firmness becoming his character. The affair of the supremacy was no less a matter of conscience to him than the other; but as the statute which enacted it, had made it treason to write or speak against it, he observed a silence in this respect, conformable to the law; but refused to acknowledge it with an oath; wherefore, the king being determined to get rid of a man who had given him so much trouble, and of whose virtues and popularity he stood in awe, gave orders, that Sir Thomas More should be brought to his trial.

In consequence of this, on a day appointed, he was conveyed in a boat from the Tower to Westminster-hall. So long an imprisonment had impaired his strength, he went, therefore, leaning on his staff from the water-side; but though his countenance carried the marks of weakness and infirmity, it had the same air of cheerfulness, which always sat upon it in the days of his prosperity. He was tried by the lord chancellor, and a committee of the lords.

lords, with some of the judges at the bar of the King's-bench. When the attorney-general, had gone through the charge against him, in the indictment, in the most virulent manner, the lord-chancellor said to him; in which he was seconded by the duke of Norfolk, " You see now, how grievously you have offended his majesty ; nevertheless, he is so merciful, that, if you will but leave your obstinacy, and change your opinion, we hope you may yet obtain pardon of his highness for what is past." To this he replied with great resolution, " That he had much cause to thank these noble lords for this courtesy, but he besought Almighty God, that, through his grace, he might continue in the mind he was then in unto death." After this, he was permitted to say what he could for himself, in answer to the indictment ; and began as follows :

" There are four principal heads, if I am not deceived, of this my indictment ; every one of which, God willing, I propose to answer in order. To the first that is objected against me, That I have been an enemy, out of stubbornness, to the king's second marriage : I confess, that I always told his majesty my opinion in it, as my conscience dictated to me ; but I am so far from thinking myself guilty of high treason upon this account, that, on the contrary, being asked in a matter of such great importance, had I basely flattered my prince against my conscience, then, I think, I should have worthily been accounted a wicked subject, and a perfidious

fidious traitor to God. However, if I offend-
ed, I suppose there has already been punish-
ment sufficient in the loss of all my goods,
and almost fifteen months imprisonment. My
second accusation is, that I have transgressed
a statute, in that being a prisoner, and twice
examined by the lords of the council, I would
not disclose unto them my opinion, out of an
obstinate and traitorous mind, whether the
king was supreme head of the church, or not:
yet I then protested, that I had never said or
done any thing against it, neither can one
word or action of mine be produced to make
me culpable. By all which I know that I
could not transgress any law, or incur any
crime of treason: for neither this statute, nor
any law in the world, can punish a man for
holding His peace: they only can punish either
words or deeds, God alone being judge of
our secret thoughts. I come now to the third
capital matter of my indictment, whereby I
am accused, that I maliciously practised against
this statute, because I wrote eight packets of
letters, whilst I was in the Tower, to bishop
Fisher, by which I exhorted him to break the
same law. I would have these letters produc-
ed, and read against me, which may either
free me, or convict me of a lie. But, because
you say the bishop burnt them all, I will here
tell the truth of the whole matter: some of
them were only about our private affairs, as
being old friends and acquaintance: one of
them was in answer to his, whereby he desired
to know how I had answered in my examina-

tions to this oath of supremacy ; touching which, this only I wrote unto him again, 'That I had already settled my conscience, let him settle his to his own good liking ; and this, I truit, is no breach of your laws. The last objected crime is, that being examined in the Tower, I did say, that this law was like a two-edged sword ; for, in consenting thereto, I should endanger my soul ; and, in refusing it, I should lose my life. From which answer, because bishop Fisher made the like, it is evidently gathered, as you say, that we both conspired together. To this I reply, that if his answer were like mine, it proceeded not from any conspiracy of ours, but from the likeness of our wits and learning. And, to conclude, I unfeignedly avouch, that I never spoke a word against this law to any living man ; although, perhaps, his majestie has been told to the contrary.'

To a justification so full as this, the attorney-general had no reply to make ; but the word Malice being in the mouth of almost all the court, the judges proceeded to examine the witnesses, in order to prove his treason to the jury ; and Mr. Rich, the solicitor-general, being called and sworn, deposed, that when he was sent, some time before, to fetch Sir Thomas More's books and papers from the Tower, at the end of a conversation with him upon the king's supremacy, on Mr. Rich's owning on a case put by him, that no parliament could make a law that God should not be God, Sir Thomas replied, " No more can

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the parliament make the king supreme head of the church." When the solicitor-general had given this evidence to the court on oath, the prisoner, under a great surprise at the malice and falsehood of it, said, " If I was a man, my lords, that did not regard an oath, I needed not, at this time, and in this place, as it is well known to you all, stand as an accused person ; and, if this oath, Mr. Rich, which you have taken, be true, then I pray, that I may never see God in the face; which I would not say, were it otherwise, to gain the whole world." Upon which, the solicitor not being able to prove his testimony by witnesses, tho' he attempted it, that allegation dropped.

The reader, who has attended to this impartial abstract of the trial, and who considers the characters of the prisoner and the witness, will, it is apprehended, acquit Sir Thomas More of the indictment without any hesitation. • But, unhappily for him, he lived in the days of Henry VIII whose will was a law to judges, as well as juries: notwithstanding, therefore, that his innocence was so clearly pointed out, and the evidence against him so ill supported, or rather proved so evidently to be false; yet the jury, to their eternal reproach, found him guilty. They had no sooner brought in their verdict, than the lord-chancellor Audley, as the mouth of the court, began immediately to pronounce the sentence; but the prisoner stopped him short with this modest rebuke: " My lord,

when I was towards the law, the manner in such cases was, to ask the prisoner, before sentence, whether he could give any reason why judgment should not proceed against him?" Upon this, the chancellor had the grace to stay, and asked Sir Thomas what he was able to alledge. But if a jury could not be moved by what he had said in defending himself against the charge in this indictment, there could be little hope, that judges would be influenced to waive their sentence by what he should say against the matter of the indictment itself. However, whether the exceptions he made were too strong to be answered; or whether the chancellor began at this time to feel some little compunction; or, whether he had reason to be afraid of the popular clamour, if he took the condemnation of the prisoner entirely upon himself; after Sir Thomas had done speaking, he turned to the lord-chief-justice, and asked him his opinion openly before the court, as to the validity of the indictment, notwithstanding the exceptions of the prisoner. The answer of the chief-justice, whose name was Fitz-James, is somewhat remarkable: "My lords all, by St. Gillian, I must needs confess, that if the act of parliament be not unlawful, then in my conscience the indictment is not insufficient." Upon this equivocal expression, the lord-chancellor said to the rest, "Lo, my lords; lo, you hear what my lord-chief-justice saith;" and, without waiting for any reply, proceeded to pass sentence, "That Sir Thomas More

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should be carried back to the Tower of London, and from thence drawn on a hurdle through the City to Tyburn, there to be hanged till he was half dead ; after that cut down, yet alive, his private parts cut off, his belly ripped, his bowels burnt, his four quarters set up over four gates of the City, and his head upon London-bridge."

This shocking sentence filled the eyes of many with tears, and their hearts with horror ; then the court telling Sir Thomas, that if he had any thing further to say, they were ready to hear him, he stood up, and said, " I have nothing to say, my lords, but that like as the blessed apostle St. Paul was present, and consented to the death of Stephen, and kept their cloaths who stoned him to death, and yet be they now both twain holy saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever ; so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray, that though your lordships have now been judges on earth to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter all meet together in heaven, to our everlasting salvation : and so I pray God preserve you all, and especially my sovereign lord the king, and send him faithful councellors."

Having taken his leave of the court in this noble manner, he was conducted from the bar to the Tower, with the axe carried before him in the usual manner after condemnation. But, when he came to the Tower-Wharf, his favourite daughter, Mrs. Roper, thinking this would be the last opportunity she should ever

havc, was waiting there so see him: as soon as he appeared, she burst through the throng and guard, which surrounded him, and having received his blessing upon her knees, she embraced him eagerly before them all, amidst a flood of tears, and a thousand kisses of tenderness, and affection; her heart being ready to break with grief, the only words that she could utter, were, "My father, oh my father." If any thing could have shaken his fortitude, it must be this; but he only took her up in his arms, and told her, "That whatsoever he should suffer, tho' he was innocent, yet it was not without the will of God, to whose blessed pleasure she should conform her own will; that she knew well enough all the secrets of his heart, and that she must be patient for her loss." Upon this she parted from him; but scarce was she turned aside, before her passion of grief and love became irresistible, and she again suddenly broke through the croud, ran eagerly upon him the second time, took him round the neck, and hung upon him with her embraces, ready to die with sorrow: this was rather too much for man to bear, and though he did not speak a word, yet the tears flowed down his cheeks in great abundance, till she took her last kiss, and left him.

After he had lain a few days under the sentence of death, preparing his mind by prayer and meditation, for the stroke which was to follow; one of the creatures of the king made him a visit, with an intent to persuade

suade him, if possible, to comply with his majesty's will, and to change his mind. Sir Thomas, wearied at last with his nonsense and importunity, in order to get rid of him, told him, " That he had changed it;" which words were no sooner out of his mouth, than the courtier, pluming himself upon the merit he should have in bringing Sir Thomas More to the point which his majesty wished, and so many others had tried in vain ; he went in great haste and joy to inform the king. Henry, however, was not without apprehensions of a mistake ; he ordered the messenger of the news, therefore, to return immediately to the Tower, to know in what particulars the prisoner had changed his mind : when he had the mortification not only to be rebuked for his impertinent officiousness, in telling his majesty every word Sir Thomas had said, even in jest ; but also to learn, that he had changed his mind no otherways than this, " That whereas he intended to be shaved, that he might appear to the people as he was wont to do before his imprisonment, he was now fully resolved that his beard should share the same fate with his head." In consideration that he had borne the highest office in the kingdom, his sentence of being drawn, hanged, and quartered, was, by the king's pardon, changed into beheading ; and when he was informed of it, he said, with his usual mirth, " God forbid the king should use any more such mercy to any of my friends ; and God bless my posterity from such pardons.".

On the 5th of July, 1438, Sir Thomas Pope, his intimate friend, came to him from the king, very early in the morning, to acquaint him that he should be executed that day at nine o'clock, and therefore that he must immediately prepare himself for death. However, if his majesty intended to shock, or affright him by this short warning, he lost his aim so entirely, that the prisoner said to Sir Thomas Pope, "I most heartily thank you for your good tidings; I have been much bound to the king's highness for the benefit of his honours that he hath most bountifully bestowed upon me, yet I am more bound to his grace, I do assure you, for putting me here, where I have had convenient time and space to have remembrance of my end; and, so help me God, most of all I am bound unto him, that it hath pleased his majesty so shortly to rid me out of the miseries of this wretched world." His friend then told him that his majesty's pleasure further was, that he should not use many words at his execution; to which Sir Thomas answered, "You do well, Mr. Pope, to give me warning of the king's pleasure herein, for otherwise I had proposed, at that time, to have spoken somewhat, but no matter wherewith his grace, or any others, should have cause to be offended: howbeit, whatsoever I intended, I am ready to conform myself obediently to his highness's command; and I beseech you, good Mr. Pope, to be a means to his majesty, that my daughter Margaret may be at my burial."

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Being told that the king had already consented that his wife, and children, and any of his friends, might have the liberty to be present at it, he added, “ O how much beholden then am I to his grace, that unto my poor burial vouchsafes to have such gracious consideration.” Sir Thomas Pope having thus discharged his commission, bid his friend adieu, with many tears, and with much commiseration ; but the prisoner desired him to be comforted with the prospect of eternal bliss, in which they should live and love together ; and to give him an impression of the ease and quiet of his own mind, he took his urinal in his hand, and casting his water, said with his usual mirth, “ I fee no danger but that this man might live longer, if it had pleased the king.”

As soon as Sir Thomas Pope had left him, he dressed himself in the best cloaths he had, that his appearance might express the ease and complacency which he felt within ; the lieutenant of the Tower objecting to this generosity to his executioner, who was to have his cloaths, Sir Thomas assured him, “ if it was cloth of gold, he should think it well bestowed on him who was to do him so singular a benefit.” But the lieutenant, who was his friend, pressed him very much to change his dress ; and Sir Thomas, being very unwilling to deny him so small a gratification, put on a gown of frize ; and of the little money that he had left, sent an angel to the executioner, as a token of his good will.

And now the fatal hour being come, about nine o'clock he was brought out of the Tower, carrying a red cross in his hand, and often lifting up his eyes to heaven. A woman meeting him with a cup of wine, he refused it, saying, "Christ at his passion drank no wine, but gaul and vinegar." Another woman came crying and demanded some papers she said she had left in his hands when he was lord chancellor; to whom he said, "Good woman, have patience but for an hour, and the king will rid me of the care I have for these papers, and every thing else." Another woman followed him, crying, he had done her much wrong when he was lord-chancellor; to whom he said, "I very well remember the cause; and if I were to decide it now, I should make the same decree." When he came to the scaffold, it seem'd ready to fall; whereupon he said, merrily, to the lieutenant, "Pray, Sir, see me safe up; and as to my coming down, let me shift for myself." Then he desired the people to pray for him, and bear witness he died in the faith of the catholic church, a faithful servant both to God and the king. He repeated the miserere psalm kneeling with much devotion; and the executioner asking him forgiveness, he kissed him, and said, "Pluck up thy spirits man, and be not afraid to do thine office; my neck is very short, take heed therefore thou strike not awry, for saving thine honesty." Laying his head upon the block, he bid the executioner stay till he had put his beard aside, for that



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that had committed no treason ; upon which, at one blow of the axe, his head was severed from his body. In this manner ended the life of Sir Thomas More, who, for his justice, humility, devotion, sweetness of temper, contempt of the world, and true greatness of mind, was the ornament of his own, and may be an example to every age.

THE LIFE OF JOHN COLET, D. D.

THIS excellent man, was son and heir to Sir Henry Colet, knight, who being bred a mercer in London, was one of the sheriffs in 1477 ; escaping the tyranny of Richard the IIId. and assisting Henry the VIIth, in the beginning of his reign, was knighted, and elected lord mayor ; to which office he had the honour to be called a second time. Sir Henry had two and twenty children, eleven sons, and as many daughters, by his wife Christian Knevet, a gentlewoman of good family ; he himself being also descended from a very antient and reputable house, in Buckinghamshire : but John was not only the eldest fruit of this marriage, but within a few years became the sole surviving issue. It appears that he buried his father in the

year 1510, but his mother lived to bury him, being at her death upwards of ninety years old. Sir Henry and his lady were very eminent for their charity, but for nothing more than their great munificence towards their parish church; which was then called St Anthony's, but now St. Antholin's, within the city of London; their effigies, with those of all their children, being to be seen, in ^{Fr}ewe's time, in the glass windows, on the north side of that edifice; and in this parish, their son John was born, Anno Domini 1468.

As to his early education, we have but a very imperfect account of it; however, it is a very probable conjecture, that he received the first rudiments of learning at St. Anthony's free-school, then the most famous in London; from whence, in 1483, he removed to the university of Oxford; where having spent seven years in logical and philosophical study, he was licenced to proceed in arts; being so exquisitely learned, that all the works of Tully were as familiar to him as his epistles; neither was he a stranger to Plato, and Plotinus, which he diligently pursued and compared, one as a comment on the other. But such was the infelicity of those times, that the Greek language, was not only neglected in our schools and universities, but the love, and encouragement of it, was looked upon as heresy; in reference to which barbarous opinion, Erasmus quotes a proverb, "Cave a Græcis, ne fias hereticus, Take care of the Greek, lest you become a heretic."

So that Colet was obliged to read the above-mentioned authors, in their Latin translations, till in his more advanced years, he became acquainted with the great originals.

When Colet had taken his degrees in arts at Oxford, he had a sufficient estate to support him as a gentleman, and a fair interest to recommend him at court. He had the advantage of a tall and graceful personage: and this turn to a courtier might perhaps have been the advice of his father, who had been used to gaiety and splendour in the public offices in the City, and gained a very particular interest in the king: but the pious young man, determined by his own spirit of religion, was resolved to enter into holy orders, and renounce the temptations of his birth and fortune. Sir William Knevet, knight, and Dame Joan his wife, presented Colet, in 1485, to the church of St. Mary Denyngton in the county of Suffolk, and diocese of Norwich. This made Cambridge a convenient road between Oxford and his benefice, and might well intitle him to that relation to both universities, which is ascribed to him by Polydore Virgil. He was scarce nineteen years old, when he was presented to this great living of Denyngton, which he kept as long as he lived. In 1490 he was also presented by his own father to the living of Thrynnning, in the county of Huntingdon, and diocese of Lincoln; which he resigned in 1493, when he was admitted to the prebendary of Botevant in the church of York, upon the resignation of

of the famous Christopher Urwick. He was also made prebend of Goodeaster in the church of St. Martin Le Grand, which he resigned the 26th of January 1503, having been admitted the year before to the prebend of Durnesford in the church of Sarum. These early preferments had great weight upon his mind ; as well as every thing that tended towards bringing on a reformation in the church. But he had such a tender regard to the dignity of his sacred office and function, that he deferred being ordained deacon till the 17th of December, 1497, and the same year he was made priest.

These preferments, bestowed on a youth under age, may seem a little extraordinary to some ; but we must consider it was the custom of the Romish church ; and, if Mr. Colet did enter upon the care of souls before he could sufficiently consider the weighty charge belonging thereto, he attoned for it by his extraordinary care, when he came to maturity. Besides, he had, from his first entrance into the college, turned himself much to reading books of divinity : Erasmus assures us, that he had searched into, and gained a perfect acquaintance with, the antient fathers, particularly Dionysius, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerom, and St. Austin, while he was yet a boy, though the last author was never one of his favourites : nor were his studies confined to these books alone ; he also read Scotus and Thomas, the two great schoolmen, who gave birth to the different parties then subsisting

ing in our universities, under the denomination of Scotists and Thomists. But he looked over their trash, rather in compliance with the fashion of the age, than from any pleasure he received from it. His principal industry was laid out in consulting the best tracts in the civil and canon law : there was no treatise, relating either to the history of the church or state, which he did not diligently inspect ; nay he even ran through all such English poets as were then extant, with a view to correct and embellish his stile, and fit him for an eloquent preacher. Another of his cotemporary writers says, that Colet, by an easy and natural disposition, was inclined to piety and religion : therefore, as soon as he grew towards a man, and was well instructed in all those arts and sciences that are called humanity, he applied himself to the study of divinity, chusing St. Paul as his particular master, and exercising himself perfectly in his writings both at Oxford and Cambridge.

But not content with these improvements, in the year 1493, our young divine determined to leave his native country, and polish, in foreign parts, what he had acquired at home. With this intent, he quitted Oxford, and passing over to the continent, studied divinity both in Italy and France, where he met with several other English students, who were come abroad in order to attain the Greeek tongue ; for the passion for that language, and the purer writers, in the Latin, was now grown very prevalent all over Europe, and

and no where more than in England, from whence numbers of the youth, and many advanced in life, continually went out in quest of them ; because, though several volumes of the works of the best authors lay dormant in our colleges and monasteries, the monks, who knew that ignorance was their chief support, could by no means be brought to communicate them.

At the time when Colet went abroad the grand mart of letters was at Paris : thither he directed his pursuit. His large income enabled him to render his parts conspicuous, and those quickly gained the esteem and admiration of all that saw and heard him. Here he met with an agreeable companion in Robert Guaguinus, the historian, who had been ambassador from Charles, the French king, to Henry VII. and here it was also that Collet first conceived an inclination to be acquainted with Erasmus, Guaguinus by shewing him a specimen of that celebrated Dutchman's parts and learning, in a letter sent to him upon his publishing the history of France. In this place Colet likewise acquired the friendship of Deloine and Budens ; the former of which recommended him to the notice of Erasmus, by the honourable mention he made of our English doctor in his letters to Holland. Colet visited several parts of Italy, and resided some months at Rome, where there was an English court, on account of frequent embassies. It was at this place that the celebrated William Lily

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first fell under his observation, who had learnt the Greek at Rhodes, and was improving himself in Latin under John Sulpitius and Pomponius Sabinus. Culet also contracted an intimacy with some learned foreigners, as well as with his own countrymen Grocyne and Linacer, who were perfecting their skill in Greek at Florence, under the instruction of Demetrius and Politianus, as William Latimer was at Padua.

Colet remained about four years on his travels, returning from abroad in 1497: but upon this occasion it is said, he had much difficulty to resist his desire of appearing at court, where he could shew the accomplishments he had acquired in the world to the best advantage. Indeed he was endowed with some natural propensities, which were better adapted to a public life, than the confinement of a college. He had naturally a high spirit, impatient of the least injury and affront. By the same bent of nature he was also addicted to love and luxury; he had a tincture of avarice, and was inclined to an air of freedom and pleasantry. But he first conquered, and then commanded himself, by so far subjecting his passions to reason and philosophy, that he could bear a reproof, even from his own servants. He restrained his disposition to love, sleep, and luxury, by a continual abstinence, a strict sobriety, close application, serious thinking, and religious conversation; he preserved every step of his whole life from the pollutions of the world, and

and Erasmus tells us, that he was perfectly chaste, and died in virgin purity: and yet, whenever opportunities offered themselves, either of jesting with facetious persons, or talking familiarly with the female sex, or of appearing at feasts and entertainments, nature was sure to break forth; for which reason, he very seldom associated with laymen, and forbore all public places: but if necessity brought him, he singled out some learned person from the rest, with whom he discoursed in Latin, to avoid the profane discourses of the table; and, in the mean time, he would eat of but one dish, and take but one or two draughts of beer, for the most part refraining from wine, which yet he relished, if very good. “There never was, (says Erasmus) a more flowing wit; and, for that reason, he delighted in the like society; but even there he chose such discourses as favoured most of religion; and it is a proof of his great goodness, that he was a passionate lover of little children, whose innocence he admired of all things.”

The first thing which Colet did, after his return home, was to be ordained deacon, and, shortly after, priest. His father and mother then lived at London, with whom he resided a few months; but he thought the duties of his function were, of all things, what most merited his regard: upon which he left them, and retired to Oxford the same year; it being the custom at that time for men of distinguished parts in the university to set up voluntary lectures,

lectures, by way of exposition or comment on some celebrated writer. Colet had neither taken nor desired any degree in divinity; but he read lectures in the university, without stipend or reward, by way of exposition of the epistles of St. Paul. The novelty of these exercises might, at first, gather an audience, yet nothing could have kept it up, but the abilities of the performer. There was not a doctor in divinity or law, or any other dignity in the church, who neglected to hear Colet, or withheld from him the applause that he deserved; the bigots only, and those whose interest it was to keep up the old ignorance and superstition, treated his discourses as those of a heretic and schismatic, because they openly avowed the necessity for a reformation.

Things were in this posture at Oxford, when Erasmus, who had been for some time at Paris, as tutor to the lord Montjoy, was prevailed on by that nobleman to come over to England; and having a recommendation to Richard Charnock, of the college of St. Mary the Virgin, he went directly to that university, where he was received and accommodated with diet and lodging, in the most friendly and hospitable manner; and at this time, and in this place, it was, that the friendship of those two celebrated men, Colet and Erasmus, had its first beginning.

Charnock, to whom Erasmus had been recommended, was also an intimate acquaintance of Colet's; and he had no sooner mentioned

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the name of his guest, than we find the doctor's impatience to recommend himself to so excellent a person ; for not waiting an opportunity to see Erasmus, he immediately wrote him, from his own chamber, an elegant and agreeable epistle, in such a set of obliging thoughts and expressions, as shewed the writer to be a scholar, a traveller, and a gentleman ; concluding with these words : “ I congratulate your arrival in this island, and wish our country could be as pleasant to you, as, I know, you, by your great learning, must be useful to our country. I am, sir, and shall always be, devoted to one whom I think to be the most learned and the best of men.” Erasmus directly returned him an answer, equally polite and spirited, and said, “ If he could find any thing commendable in himself, he should be proud of being commended by such a worthy person, to whose judgement he allowed so great weight ; but his silent esteem alone had been preferable to all the applause of a theatre at Rome. “ Your country of England,” adds he, “ is most pleasant to me upon many accounts, particularly in this, that it abounds with those blessings, without which nothing would relish with me, men of admirable learning, among whom, no one will repine, that I reckon you the chief.” He then praises the stile of his letters, as easy, smooth, unaffected, flowing from a rich vein, as water from a clear fountain, every part like itself ; open, plain, modest, having nothing in it rough, turbid, or intricate ; so that

he could see the image of his soul in what he wrote.

This foundation of friendship, laid in writing, ended in the strictest intimacy imaginable, which continued to the end of their lives. They studied to improve each other, and instruct mankind: thus, after a Latin sermon, being once at a public dinner in the university, where Colet sat as moderator; and the table talk was scholastic and theological, Colet said, “That the greatest offence of Cain, and the most odious in the sight of God, was his distrusting the bounty of our Creator, and placing too much confidence in his art and industry by tilling the ground; while his brother Abel, content with the natural productions of the earth, was only feeding sheep.” The whole company engaged upon this argument: “But in truth (says Erasmus) Colet was more than a match for us all: he seemed to be filled with a divine spirit, and to be somewhat above a man: he spoke not only with his voice, but with his eyes, his countenance, and his whole deportment.” Indeed, their love and friendship for each other grew so extraordinary, that Erasmus, in a letter to lord Montjoy, acquaints him, “That nothing could be more sweet, lovely, and charming, than the temper and conversation of Colet; and that he could live in Scythia, or the remotest part of the world, with such an agreeable friend and companion.”

In 1499, Erasmus and his admired friend first held their conferences upon ‘our blessed Saviour’s

Saviour's reluctances and fears before his last passion. Colet could not approve of the common opinion of divines, that Christ, upon a prospect of his agonies, shrank from them in his human nature. Erasmus maintained the opinion of the schoolmen: but Colet had the advantage of the best meaning, and of the greatest courage, in departing from the common sentiments of the schools and the church, in that credulous age. Erasmus concludes his epistle concerning this dispute, in the most friendly and respectful manner; calling himself a rash man, and a raw soldier, for entering the lists with such an experienced general as Colet; appearing pleased at his confutation, Colet telling him, "When, like two flints, we are striking one another, if any spark of light flies out, let us eagerly catch at it; we seek not for our own opinion, but for truth, which, in this mutual conflict, may be extorted as fire out of steel." Colet also freely expressed to Erasmus his great dislike of that new theology, which was unhappily brought into the church by the modern schoolmen, and was, in effect, nothing of the art of trifling and wrangling. He told him, he had set himself against those scholastic divines, and would, if possible, restore the theological studies that were founded upon the scriptures, and the primitive fathers. He said, it was upon this view, he had publickly expounded the epistles of St. Paul, and should be glad of a partner in that labour of searching the scriptures.

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When Erasmus left England, Colet still continued at Oxford, where he went on with his usual exposition of the apostolical epistles; though the use and study of the scriptures was so low at this time, that the highest degree of doctor of divinity could not admit a man to the reading of them, which made Colet negligent of those degrees. However, by the importunity of his friends, we find him doctor of divinity in 1504: but his thoughts were entirely bent on the destruction of that idol of ignorance, the cobweb divinity of the schools, and to exalt the scriptures and Jesus Christ in its room; for which reason the schoolmen always look upon Colet with a jealous eye; whom he frequently engaged, always vanquished, and never convinced; though he still continued to shew the necessity of a reformation, by expelling the Scotists and Thomists, who had divided the Christian world between them, by discovering the shameful abuses of monasteries, and religious houses; and by the perils of imposing celibacy on the clergy.

King Henry VII. loved to give unexpected and undesired favours. He looked upon Colet as a most eminent divine, and excellent preacher: he found this priest without ambition, therefore thought him more worthy of preferment; and, in 1505, Colet was made dean of St. Paul's, without his solicitation or knowledge. Erasmus was then at Paris, and immediately sent a letter to his friend on his promotion, wherein he says, "He could not

so much congratulate his person, as the world, which would have the benefit ; and the honours themselves, which then seemed worthy of their name, when they fell upon a man of merit, without his own seeking. And indeed, this excellent man, as if he had been called to the labours, not to the dignity of his office, restored the decayed discipline of his cathedral church, and brought in what was a new practice there, preaching himself upon Sundays, and all solemn festivals. He would not even take a desultory text out of the gospel or epistle for the day, but chose a fixed and larger subject, which he prosecuted in several successive discourses, till he went through the whole. He had always a full auditory, and the chief magistrates of the city. Nor was he only a free and constant preacher of the gospel in his own cathedral, but at court, and in many other churches, where his sermons were much frequented, because the strict discipline of his life regularly corresponded with the integrity of his doctrine.

Till this time, there was scarce so much as a Latin Testament in any cathedral church in England. Instead of the gospel of Christ, the gospel of Nicodemus was affixed to a pillar in the nave of the metropolitan church of Canterbury. But the method that dean Colet took in expounding the scriptures, though in a language unknown to the people, began to raise in them an enquiry after those oracles of God ; and that he was more than half a protestant, appears from his condemning auricular

lar profession, purgatory, and the daily celebration of Mass. He would have all divine service performed in a serious and solemn manner: he was delighted with the apostolical epistles; but more affected with the admirable words of our Saviour in the gospels, which he selected under proper heads, and intended to write a book upon them.

Erasmus has transmitted the following relation of the deans's manner of living, as an example to posterity. "The dean's table, under the name of hospitality, had savoured too much of pomp and luxury, which he contracted to a more frugal and temperate way of entertainment: it had been his custom, for many years, to eat only one meal a day, that of dinner; so that he always had the evening to himself. When he dined privately with his own family, he had some strangers for his guests; but few, because his provision was frugal, though genteel. The settings were short, and such as pleased only the learned and good. When grace before meat was said, some boy, who had a good voice, read distinctly a chapter out of one of St. Paul's Epistles, or out of the Proverbs of Solomon. When the chapter was ended, the dean would mention some particular part of it, from whence he would frame a subject for conversation, and ask his companions their sense of its meaning: but he so adapted his manner to their dispositions, that he caused even these grave subjects neither to tire their patience, or give any other distaste. Towards

the end of the repast, he generally started another subject of discourse, and then dismissed his guests, profited both in mind and body from those visits which they paid him. The conversation of his particular friends gave him infinite delight, which he would sometimes protract till far in the evening ; but their discourse was either on religion or learning. He was curious in the choice of his company ; therefore, if he could not have such as were agreeable, he caused a servant to read to him out of the scriptures. In his travelling, says Erasmus, he would sometimes make me one of his company, and then no man was more easy and pleasant. He always carried a book with him, and seasoned his conversation with religion. He had an aversion to all indecent or improper speaking ; loved to be neat and clean in his apparel, furniture, entertainment, books, and whatever belonged to him ; yet he despised all state and magnificence. Though it was then a custom for the higher clergy to appear in purple, his habit was only black. His upper garment was of plain woollen cloth, which, in cold weather, was lined with fur. Whatever he received by church preferments, was delivered to his steward to be laid out in family occasions, or hospitality : and all that arose from his large paternal estate, was appropriated to pious and charitable uses."

Notwithstanding the dean's holy life, he could not escape the censure of an heretic ; for having a great tenderness and compassion

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for the honest people who suffered as Lollards, he had the courage to interpose for one of them with the king, who granted him his life and liberty. This act of humanity was sufficient with his bishop (who was a rigid Scotist and a virulent persecutor of the new sect) to accuse the dean of heresy, and accordingly he presented articles against him to the archbishop. But Warham well knew the worth and integrity of Colet : he defended, therefore, and patronized him ; nor would he give him the trouble of putting in any formal answer. It is also said, that the bishop would have made the dean a heretic for translating the *Pater Noster* into English, if the archbishop had not stood up in his defence.

But the troubles and persecutions which Colet underwent, only served to increase his charity and devotion. He had a plentiful estate, without any near relations ; and he was resolved to consecrate the whole property of it to some permanent benefaction, in his own life-time, as William of Wykeham had done at Winchester, in the reign of Edward III. Colet thought therefore, that it would promote the restoration and improvement of letters, to provide a grammar-school, for the instruction of youth in the two subsidiary languages of Latin and Greek. He apprehended this would be laying the best foundation for academical studies, particularly those of divinity ; and conceived, that, in being the founder of one such grammar-school, he should be the restorer of the two universities.

London was the place of his nativity, and was most worthy of his intended charity ; but the best account of this is given by Erasmus, who says, “ He laid out a great part of his inheritance in building St. Paul’s school, which is a magnificent fabric, dedicated to the child Jesus. Two dwelling-houses were added for the two masters, to whom ample salaries are allotted. The school is divided into four apartments : the boys have their distinct forms one above another ; and every form holds sixteen. The wise founder saw, that the greatest hopes and happiness of common wealth were in the training up of children to good letters and true religion ; for which noble purpose he laid out an immense sum, and would admit no person to bear a share in the expence.

After he had finished all, he left the perpetual care, government, and superintendency of the estate, to married citizens, of probity and reputation. When he was asked the reason, he answered, There is no certainty in human affairs ; that he found less corruption in such a body of citizens, than in any other body of men. The founder has not clogged this noble seminary with any statute that might prevent it from being generally useful to the world. Children born in any part of the kingdom, even foreigners of all nations and countries, are capacitated to take part of its privileges. The wisdom of the founder is also very apparent, in giving liberty to declare the sense of his statutes in general, and

to alter or correct, add or diminish, as should be thought proper and convenient, in future times, for the better government of the school.

These statutes were drawn up by the dean himself, in English; but with such a grave and pious strain, that they seem to have been wrote by one who was not of the communion of the Romish church. In the prologue he says, that "desiring nothyng more thanne education and bringing uppe children in good manners, and literature, in the yere of our Lorde A. M. fyve hundred and twelfe, he bylded a scole the estende of Paulis churche, of clxxii. to be taught fre in the same. And ordained there a maister, and a surmaister, and a chapelyn, with sufficient and perpetual stipeendas ever to endure; and set patrones and defenders, governours and rulers of that same scole, the most honest and faithful fellowshipe of the mercers of London."

As dean Colet had been the pious founder of this school, he also laboured himself to be the perpetual teacher and instructor of the schoolars, by drawing up some rudiments of grammar, with an abridgment of the principles of religion, and published them for the standing use of Paul's school. It was called Paul's Accidence, and dedicated to William Lily, the first master, in a short elegant Latin epistle, dated the first of August, 1510. In this introduction to grammar, the dean prescribed some excellent rules for the admission and continuance of boys in his school, which were to be read over to the parents, when

they first brought their children, for their assent to them, as the express terms and conditions of expecting any benefit of education there. The dean also prevailed on Erasmus to translate from the English the institution of a Christian man into Latin verse, briefly and plainly, for the easy apprehension and memory of the boys; which was to be the school catechism; with many other good essays, both in poetry and prose, towards directing and securing the principles and morals of his scholars: and Erasmus dedicated to him his two books "De copia verborum ac rerum," to form the style, and help the invention of young scholars, commends his piety and judgment in consulting and promoting the good of his country. "In both these respects," says Erasmus, "who would not love and admire that generous greatness of mind in you, that you paid both these regards to your country in such a sincere and disinterested manner, that by so many elaborate sermons, in so long a course of years, you are not one farthing the richer; and though you sowed your spiritual things in such plenty, you reaped no bodily things: and though the expences of your school were such an immense burthen, that it might well have affrighted any noble peer; yet you took it all upon yourself. When the common sort of mankind are well pleased to admit of any assistance in such cases, you chose to spend your patrimony, your whole revenue, your very furniture and household goods, rather than admit any person

to

to be a partner in the glory of your ample foundation. You become poor, to make them rich ; naked, to cloath and adorn them. By your great labours, you almost destroy yourself, to make them now in Christ : you spend yourself, to gain them salvation."

Erasmus observes, that Colet had a proverbial saying, " We are all such as our conversation is, and come habitually to practise what we frequently hear." He has preserved this apothegm in his elaborate collection of adages, and has given it the preference to any of the sentences of the antient philosophers. Colet rewarded Erasmus for all his services, and allowed him a yearly pension ; he studied how to promote his interest, and recommended him to the patronage of Sir Henry Guilford, who was a rising favourite at court. Colet was also instrumental in keeping up the correspondence between Henry VIII. and Erasmus, and prevailed on his majesty to send him a liberal present, with a strong invitation to come once more into England.

It is observed by Burnet, that though Colet always preached in Latin, he never made use of notes ; and a very remarkable sermon of his is quoted, which he preached in this manner, upon the opening of a convocation in the province of Canterbury. The text was, " Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your minds ;" which was so full of reformation principles, that Burnet was in some doubt, whether he should not make it a preface to his history.

In this sermon, Colet, according to his own translation of it, said, “ We wyshe ye wold mynd the reformation of the churches matter. For it was never more nede. And the state of the church dyd never desyre more youre endevurs : therefore, with all your mynd, thynke upon the reformation of the churche.” He shewed, that the being conformed to this world, is to follow its four evils, pride, lusts, avarice, and secular busines ; all which reigned in the church and priests. As to the other part, he said, “ Be we reformed to mekenes, to sobernes, to charity, to spiritual occupation : therefore, let those laws be rehersed that restrayne vice, and further virtue.” He fully exposed the vices of the clergy, and had the boldnes to tell them, that “ prelates are chosen often times more by favour of men, than by the grace of God : therefore, truly have we nat a fewe tymes bishops full litell spiritual men, rather worldly than heavenly, favouring more the spirite of this worlde, than the spirite of Christe.” He expatiated upon the pomp and vanity of the dignified clergy, and said, “ At the last lette be renewed those lawes and constitutions of fathers of celebration of councels, that commaunde prouincial councels to be oftener used for the reformation of the churche : for there never hapeneth no thyn more hurtful to the church of Christe, than the lack both of councell generall and provinciall.” He exhorted the bishops to set a good example to the inferior clergy, and observed, that “ the clergies and spiritual parts

JOHN COLET, D. D.

ones reformed in the church, than may we with a juste ordre procede to the reformation of the lays part ; the whiche truely wyll be very easy to do, if we fyrt be reformed ; for the bodye followeth the soule. Our goodness shall compel them into the right way, truly more effectuously, than all your suspendynges and cursynges." He concluded with a decent apology ; yet admonished them to reform, and freely said, " Truly ye are gathered often tymes together (but by your favoure to speke the trouth) yet I see nat what frute cometh of your assemblyng, namely to the churche."

As a proof of Henry the Eighth's moderation, we are told, that when he was preparing for war against France, doctor Colet was appointed to preach before him at court; which he did, and in general terms inveighed so strongly against the impiety of going to war, that it was thought the preacher would have been sent to prison, or perhaps more severely censured. But the king sent for Colet, and was at so much pains to convince him of the necessity of the war he was entering upon, that the dean, in a second sermon upon the same subject, preached up the lawfulness, the piety, and expediency of war for the service of our country. This sermon pleased the king so much, that he gave the dean thanks, and, ever after, his countenance ; saying to his nobles, who attended him, " Well, let every one chuse his own doctor, but this shall be mine." His majesty then took a glass of wine, and drakk very graciously to the preacher's health, whom

he dismissed with all the marks of affection, and promised him any favour he should ask for himself or friends.

Besides his dignities and preferments, already mentioned, doctor Colet was also rector of the fraternity or gild of Jesus in St. Paul's church, (for which he procured new statutes) and also chaplain and preacher-in ordinary to king Henry VIII. and, if Erasmus is not mistaken, one of his privy-council. When he came to about the fiftieth year of his age, he grew so weary of the world, that he fully designed to sequester himself in some monastery, and there pass the remainder of his days in peace and solitude : but the objections he had to the conduct of those establishments were invincible ; wherefore, he built a convenient house, within the precinct of the Charterhouse, near Richmond palace in Surry, where he intended to retire in his old age, when unable to discharge the duties of his function. But death prevented him ; for having been seized by that dreadful and epidemical disease called the sweating sickness, at two several times before, he relapsed into it a third, which threw him into a consumption, and carried him off on the 16th of September, 1519, in the fifty-third year of his age. One of his physicians judged his disease to be the dropsy ; but no extraordinary symptoms appeared upon opening the body, only that the capillary vessels of the liver had some pustulary eruptions. His corpse was carried from Sheen to London, and, by the care of his old decrepit mother, it was buried

buried in the cathedral church of St. Paul's with an humble monument, and only this inscription, designed by himself, Jo. Coletvs. However, the company of mercers, being willing to shew how much they valued him, erected another to his memory with his effigies ; but that being destroyed in the great fire, all that now remains is the description which Sir William Dugdale gives us of it in his history of St. Paul's cathedral.

The loss of this excellent man was greatly lamented by all the learned men in Europe, and particularly by Erasmus, who speaks of him in this manner to Lumset : " O true divine ! O pure preacher of the gospel of Christ ! with what labour and pleasure did he imbibe the principles of the right Christian philosophy ! How sweetly did he suck in the doctrines ; and the very spirit of St. Paul ! How did he fully answer what he taught, by what he lived ! " He expressed his sorrow to bishop Fisher in a most affecting manner, and says, " I write now in tears for the decease of dean Colet : I know his state is happy ; but, in the name of the world, I must deplore the loss of such an admirable example of Christian piety, such an excellent preacher of the gospel of Christ ; and even, in my own name, I must lament the loss of a constant friend, and incomparable patron." He drew up the life of Colet, to which he prefixed that of John Viterier, for the use of Jodocus Jonas, rector of the university of Erfurd, to whom he says, " Now, in my opinion, you should make no

scruple of inserting those two good Christians into the catalogue of saints, though they were not canonized by the pope. Happy souls ! to whom I am so much beholden : assist with your prayers poor Erasmus, yet struggling in this lower world ; that he may be brought into your blest society above, never more to be separated."

As for the things that he wrote, they are many : but being found in his study after his death, few understood them, because written only for his own understanding, with intention, if he had been spared, that they should have been all fairly transcribed and published.

His person was very graceful ; and there was something in his mien and carriage, which became him, and every thing he said or did. He is described by Erasmus to be tall and comely ; and very fair till his complexion was changed by the sweating sickness and consumption. His learning and piety were certainly above the pitch of the times in which he lived ; and it is wonderful, that he met with such great favours from two successive princes, who were none of the mildest in their tempers, as the sufferings of other good men in their reigns testify. From the whole, it amply appears, that dean Colet was a very eminent forerunner of the reformation ; and we glory in him as such : as well as for his being founder of that famous seminary of learning, which has produced many excellent persons both in church and state.



CROMWELL Earl of Essex

THE LIFE OF
THOMAS CROMWELL.

THE Persians have a fable written by one of their most celebrated poets, in which the pine tree, and the cotton shrub, are brought together, disputing about pre-eminency ; the tree claims it on account of its height, and up-right position, and reflects on the cotton shrub, as contemptible, on account of its diminutiveness ; but the shrub gets the better in the argument, in consideration of its valuable fruit ; thereby conveying this moral, that men are not to be esteemed according to their birth, or appearance, but according to the excellency of their qualities ; and as, in the former of these lights, the memorable person we are about to treat of, will be held among the meanest ; so, in the latter, were actions alone are considered, he will undoubtedly be rated among the most exalted of our English worthies.

This man, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, and one of the principal agents in bringing about the reformation, was no better than the son of a blacksmith, born at Putney, in the year 1498, in which place he received all the education he ever had, being taught to read and write at the parish school ; where he acquired Latin enough to understand his Creed and Pater-noster. It appears, however, that,

that, in his latter days, his father turned brewer; and that, upon his mother's being left a widow, she married a second husband, who was a sheerman in London; but this person's name is no where recorded, neither is there any certainty as to the Christian name of Cromwell's own father.

It cannot be supposed that the child of such parents could have a very considerable inheritance; and, indeed, it is morally certain that our Cromwell derived nothing from his, besides a robust and healthful constitution; however, as he grew up, finding in himself a great propensity to travelling, he went into foreign countries; and, if we may credit Mr. Lloyd author of the British Worthies, was retained as a clerk or secretary in the English factory at Antwerp; but that office being too great a confinement, he ardently wished for an opportunity to get rid of it; and, very shortly, one offered, which suited with the bent of his inclinations.

There had been, for many years, a famous gild of our Lady, in the church of St. Botolph, at Boston in Lincolnshire, to which several popes had granted very considerable indulgences; and, in those days of ignorance and superstition, such things were so highly valued by the people in general, that the sisters and brethren of the gild were very anxious to have them renewed by Julius II. who then presided in St. Peter's chair; for which purpose they dispatched two messengers to Rome, with a large sum of money, to be distributed, by them,

them, as they should find their interest require. Now these taking Antwerp in their route, there became acquainted with Mr. Cromwell; and, perceiving he was much better qualified to obtain what they desired from the court of Rome, than they were themselves, they prevailed on him to accompany them thither. The consequence of this union was very favourable. Cromwell coming with them to the apostolic seat, immediately set about enquiring into the character of the reigning sovereign; and finding that he was a very great epicure, he determined to avail himself of that foible, in order to procure the grant which his companions sought for; accordingly, having caused some very curious jellies to be made, after the English fashion, then unknown in Italy, he presented them to his holiness; and the liquorish old pontiff was so well pleased with the gift, that he never made any hesitation, but granted the English commissaries whatever indulgences they required.

After this transaction, the account of Cromwell's conduct in Italy is very imperfect; we only know, that, during his stay in that country, he served under the famous duke of Bourbon, being present at the sack of Rome; and that he helped John Russel, esq. afterwards Sir John, and earl of Bedford, to make his escape from Bologna, when he was in danger of being betrayed there into the hands of the French, while he was transacting a secret commission for his master, king Henry VIII. and by this good office he acquired a friend who

was

was of great service to him on his return to England. It is said that Cromwell, in his journey to and from Rome, gave a wonderful instance of his extraordinary application and memory, by learning a new translation of the Testament, just then published, under the direction of Erasmus, by heart. But there is an instance of his gratitude, which, though it happened some years after, we must not omit to mention in this place, as it will throw a great light upon his circumstances, while he travelled, or rather wandered, up and down upon the continent.

After the defeat of the French army at Castiglioni in Italy, Cromwell was reduced to the utmost poverty and distress, having neither meat, friends, money, nor wherewith to cover himself; in which deplorable condition he arrived at the city of Florence; here there resided one Frescobald, a very rich and eminent merchant, who meeting Cromwell one day by chance, saw he was a foreigner, and in distress; he enquired into his circumstances; found he was an ingenious and deserving man, and was so wrought upon by compassion for the sufferings of his fellow creature, and a generous regard for merit, that he not only equipped Cromwell with cloaths, but made him a present of a horse, and sixteen ducats in gold, to defray his expences into his own country. Frescobald, being afterwards reduced to poverty, came over to England, where he had considerable dealings, in order to recover the sum of one thousand five hundred ducats,

ducats, which were due to him from several persons. The lord Cromwell finding him out, assisted him in the recovery of his due, and not only repaid him the fifteen ducats above-mentioned, but gave him fifteen hundred more, to make up his former losses.

Thus, we see, by whatever means our adventurer contrived to get abroad, he was but very little the better for it, with regard to his immediate circumstances ; yet may it be truly said, that Cromwell, in his travels, laid the foundation of that fortune which he subsequently enjoyed ; for being a man of great diligence, and naturally inclined to the business of state, he took care to inform himself of the several laws, customs, and governments of the nations he associated with ; and acquired so perfect a knowledge of the German, French, and Italian languages, that, when he came back into England, he could speak them fluently, and write them with correctness ; these valuable accomplishments soon recommended him to the notice of cardinal Wolsey ; and we find Cromwell was in that minister's service in 1522 ; who, on account of his great abilities, and equal industry, made him his solicitor, and frequently employed him in affairs of the utmost delicacy and importance. Cromwell, in particular, was the cardinal's principal instrument in founding the two colleges at Oxford and Ipswich : as he was, also, in suppressing the small monasteries which Henry VIII. allotted for the completing and endowing those seminaries.

But

But nothing does so great an honour to the memory of Cromwell, at his fidelity and gratitude to his master Wolsey, when that minister fell into disgrace, to whom he never failed in the smallest circumstance of affection and respect, but got into parliament (in those days a thing not very difficult) purposely to defend his cause against his enemies ; and he did it with so much strength of reason and eloquence, that no treason could be laid to the cardinal's charge : by this means, indeed, Cromwell derived great advantages to himself ; for Henry, ever on the watch for able people to serve him, without considering what they might be in other particulars, took notice of a servant who could so boldly and successfully assert the cause of his degraded master ; and, upon the dissolution of the cardinal's household, took Cromwell into his own service, though not without the additional recommendation of Sir Christopher Hales, master of the rolls, and Sir John Russel, already mentioned, who had represented him as the fittest person to manage the disputes which then subsisted between the king of England and the pope of Rome.

It was in vain for several hot-headed zealots to bellow out, at this time, that Cromwell was a sacrilegious person, and deserved to suffer the law for having been accessory to the demolition of the religious houses, rather than be advanced to the favour of his prince ; but he was already fixed in Henry's good graces ; and he liked him not the worse, perhaps, for

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continually supplicating him in favour of cardinal Wolsey. But what rendered him still more acceptable to the king, was a piece of intelligence which Cromwell gave him, that he had never, till then, been acquainted with: the new favourite told his majesty, that his authority was abused within his own realm, by the pope and his clergy, who being sworn to him, were afterwards dispensed from their oath, and sworn a-new to the bishop of Rome; so that he was but half their king, and they but half his subjects; which, as Cromwell justly observed, was derogatory to his crown, and altogether prejudicial to the common laws of his kingdom; declaring withal, that his majesty might accumulate to himself great riches, nay, as much as all the clergy in England were worth, if he pleased to take the occasion which now offered. This was a proposal the king readily listened to, and, approving entirely of his advice, he asked Cromwell if he could confirm what he said; who answered, he could, to a certainty; and thercupon shewed his majesty the oath which the prelates took to the head of the church at their consecration; wherein they swore to help, retain and defend, against all men, the popedom of Rome, the rules of the holy fathers, and the regalities of St. Peter, &c.

Consider Henry's avarice, and the aversion he now entertained against the Romish clergy, and it will be easy to conceive how agreeable such a discovery must have been to him; he
embraced

embraced Cromwell, as a mark of the highest confidence; and taking his signet from his finger, he immediately sent him with it to the convocation, which was then sitting; here Cromwell being come as a messenger from the king, silence was commanded; and, placing himself among the bishops, he began to declare to them, “The authority of a sovereign, and the duty of subjects, and especially the obedience of bishops and churchmen under public laws; which laws, notwithstanding, they had all transgressed, and highly offended, in derogation of the king’s royal estate, falling in the law of premunire; in that they had not only consented to the power legatine of cardinal Wolsey, but also, because they had sworn to the pope, contrary to the fealty of their sovereign lord the king; and, therefore, had forfeited to the crown all their goods, chattels, lands, possessions, and whatsoever livings they had.” The bishops, hearing this, were not a little frightened and astonished, and at first attempted to excuse themselves, and deny the fact: but, after Cromwell had shewn them the very copy of the oath they took to the pope at their consecration, the matter was so plain, they could say no more against it; so, to be quit of the premunire by act of parliament, the two provinces of Canterbury and York were forced to make the king a present of one hundred eighteen thousand eight hundred and forty pounds.

Now Cromwell’s fortunate star began to shine forth. In the year 1531 he was knighted,
made

made master of the Jewel Office, with a salary of fifty pounds a year, and sworn into the privy-council. The next year he was made clerk of the hanaper, a very honourable as well as lucrative employment, in the court of Chancery ; and, before the end of the same year, he was constituted chancellor of the Exchequer ; as also, in 1534, master of the rolls, and principal secretary of state. About this time he was chosen chancellor of the university of Cambridge : soon after he was elected, there followed a general visitation of the university ; at which the several halls, houses, and colleges delivered up their charters, and other instruments, to Sir Thomas Cromwell. The year before he levied the fines upon those who having forty pounds a year estate, refused to take the order of knighthood.

But Henry, who was as profuse in conferring his favours, as he was implacable in his resentments, did not think all this sufficient to distinguish the man he condescended to honour with his friendship. In the year 1535, a commission passed the great seal by his majesty's command, appointing Cromwell visitor-general of the monasteries which were to be suppressed throughout the kingdom : but in the execution of this power Sir Thomas was certainly very blameable ; he employed commissioners to act under him, and he not only winked at the injurious proceedings of these people, but encouraged them. When they came to any abbey whose order they found refractory, and not willing to consent to

to their own dissolution, they first tried them by fair means, with promises of large premiums, and other immunities; but if that failed, they had recourse to threats; nay, it is confidently reported, that, in order to terrify some into a compliance, numbers were suborned, not only to accuse their governors of the most horrid and unnatural crimes, but also to inform against each other. We are told, in particular, that the canons of Leicester were threatened by the commissioners with a charge of adultery and sodomy, in case they refused to surrender. Doctor Hindon, one of the visitors, told the nuns of Godstow, that (because he found them obstinate) he would dissolve their house, by virtue of the king's authority, in spite of their teeth. The monks of the Charter-house, near London, being somewhat uncomplying, were sent to Newgate; where they were so inhumanly handled, that some of them died, and several others were brought into the most deplorable circumstances. It is even asserted, that certain agents were employed to seduce the nuns, and then accuse them of incontinency.

There is also another circumstance, which tends greatly to aggravate the unjustifiable conduct of Cromwell upon this occasion: several monasteries gave him large sums, to the end that they might be suffered to enjoy their foundations in peace; but, after he had taken the money, he never minded the condition, but involved them with the rest. This, however, was very well contented with

Cromwell was doing ; and, as a recompence for such good services, he constituted him, on the second of July, 1506, lord-privy-seal ; on the 9th of the same month, he was created a baron, by the title of Lord Cromwell of Oakham in Rutlandshire ; and six days after he took his seat in the House of Lords.

England had now entirely shaken off the yoke of papal tyranny ; and the king, in a late session of parliament, had been acknowledged and confirmed supreme and sole head of the church upon earth. Lord Cromwell, on the 8th of July, had this uncontrollable power delegated to him, as vicar-general, or vice-gerent, under the king. What the design and extent of this commission was, may easily be gathered from the following clause of the act regulating precedence : it is there set forth, “ That, for the good exercise of the said most royal dignity and office, the supremacy, his highness hath made Thomas lord Cromwell, and lord privy-seal, his vice-gerent, for a good and due ministration of justice, to be had in all causes and cases touching the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and for the godly reformation and redress of all heresies and abuses in the said church.”

A speech made in parliament by Cromwell, when possessed of this office, shews with what zeal he promoted the measures of a master, who so ill requited his services. He in this declared, “ That there was nothing which the king so much desired, as a firm union amongst all his subjects, in which he placed his

his chief security. He knew there were many incendiaries, and much cockle grew up with the wheat. The rashness and licentiousness of some, and the inveterate superstition and stiffness of others, in the ancient conceptions, had raised great dissensions, to the sad regret of all good Christians. Some were called papists, and other heretics ; which bitterness of spirit appeared the more strange, since now the holy scriptures, by the king's great care of his people, were in all their hands, in a language understood by every body. But these were grossly perverted by both sides, who studied rather to justify their passions out of them, than to direct their belief by them. The king leaned neither to the one nor the other party, but set the pure and sincere doctrine of Christianity before their eyes ; and therefore was now resolved to have this set forth to his subjects, without any corrupt mixtures, and to have such decent ceremonies continued, and the true use of them taught ; by which all abuses might be cut off, and disputes about the exposition of the scripture cease : That all his subjects might be well instructed in their faith, and directed in the reverent worship of God ; and resolved to punish severely all transgressors, of what sort or side soever they were. The king was resolved that Christ, the gospel and truth, should have the victory ; and therefore had appointed some bishops and divines to draw up an exposition of those things that were necessary for the instruction of a Christian man ; he had

had appointed others to examine what ceremonies should be retained, and what was the true use of them: commanding the judges, and other justices of the peace, and persons commissioned for the execution of the act formerly passed, to proceed against all transgressors, and punish them according to law." Concluding with a high commendation on the king, "whose due praises," he said, "a man of far greater eloquence than himself was, could not fully set forth."

In this session the rank of the several great offices of state was fixed; and Cromwell, as vice-gerent, had a precedence assigned him over them all; and immediately after the breaking up of the parliament, he began to exercise his power to the utmost, in order to destroy popery, and establish a reformation. To this end he caused certain articles, which differed in many essential points from the Roman catholic religion, to be promulgated and enjoined by the king's authority: seven sacraments were received in the church of Rome, but the new articles mentioned only three; namely, baptism, penance, and the eucharist: add to this, that they enjoined all bishops and preachers to instruct the people to believe and maintain all these things, which are comprehended in the canon of the Bible, and in the Apostle's, the Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds, without mentioning a word of tradition; and that they should prevent offerings of incense, and kneeling to images, lest the vulgar should be led away by idolatry.

try and superstition. Purgatory was likewise in these articles declared uncertain by scripture; and in September following, lord Cromwell enjoined the clergy in general, to preach up the king's supremacy; and not to employ their eloquence in extolling relics, miracles or pilgrimages, while they ought to exhort their congregations to serve God, and provide for their families: and particular orders were issued for a Bible in Latin and English, to be laid in the churches for every one to read at their pleasure, and to be provided at the expence of the minister and the parishioners.

These innovations in religion, which were begun by his means, unavoidably occasioned many opposers to the new minister, and, together with the dissolution of the monasteries, and his demanding at the same time, subsidies for the king both from the clergy and laity, were the cause of very great murmurs against him: a rebellion breaking out about this time in Yorkshire, the insurgents demanded, among other things, that the lord Cromwell should be brought to condign punishment, as one of the subverters of the good laws of the realm, before they would lay down their arms. But the popular clamour was so far from alienating the affection of the king from him, that, in the year 1537, as a farther token of his esteem, his majesty constituted him chief justice itinerant of all the forests beyond Trent; and, on the 26th of August, the same year, he was elected knight of the garter, as also dean of the

the cathedral church of Wells. In 1539 following, he obtained a grant of the castle and lordship of Okeham, in the county of Rutland, and was made constable of Cardesbrook castle in the Isle of Wight; and as he had been so instrumental in promoting a reformation and pulling down the monasteries for three years together, the king amply rewarded him for that service, with many noble manors and huge estates, that were formerly the property of those dissolved houses: advancing him, in the month of April following, to the dignity of earl of Essex and lord high chamberlain of England.

Cromwell's acceptance of these great honours, drew upon him an additional weight of envy and ill will; for there were then alive several branches of the noble family of Bourchier, late earl of Essex, who broke his neck by a fall from a young unruly horse; and these might justly think that they were entitled to the dignity of the late earl. The office of lord high chamberlain also had been for many years hereditary in the ancient and honourable family of the de Veres, earls of Oxford; so that upon the death of John de Vere, lord chamberlain, the heirs of it could not but be highly incensed against a person so meanly descended, for robbing them of what their ancestors had so long enjoyed. Add likewise, that on the same day that lord Cromwell was created earl of Essex, Gregory his son was, by his interest, made baron Cromwell of Okeham; he being on the 1

of March, 1540, put in commission with others, to sell the abby lands at twenty years purchase; which was a thing he advised the king to do, as the surest way to stop the clamours of the people, to conciliate their affection, and bring them to a liking of the dissolution of the monasteries.

Lord Cromwell's prosperity had been hitherto uninterrupted; but such is the uncertainty of human events, that his ruin was occasioned by an unhappy precaution he took to secure his greatness; and the greater his exaltion was, the more sudden and dangerous his fall. In the year 1539, king Henry having lately lost his wife, Jane Seymour, in child-bed, began to turn his thoughts upon a German alliance; and, as the Lutheran princes were extremely disgust'd against the emperor, on account of the persecution of their religion, he hoped, by matching himself into one of those families, to renew an amity which he regarded as useful to him; Cromwell joyfully seconded this motion; and perceiving that some of his bitterest enemies, particularly Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, began to be more in favour at court than himself, he exerted his utmost endeavours to bring about a marriage between the king and Anne of Cleves: for he imagined that a queen of his own making would powerfully support his interest; and, as the friends of Anne of Cleves were all protestants, contribute greatly to bring down the popish party. But when Henry came to

see

see this lady, in whom he had been deceived by a flattering picture, he declared she was a great Flanders mare, and he could never bear her any affection. He married her however, which Cromwell thought would be the means of bringing about a better liking; but when he came, full of anxious expectation, the morning after the nuptials to enquire how the king found his bride, he had the mortification to be told, that his majesty hated her worse than ever: that he was resolved never to meddle with her, and even suspected her to be no maid; however, Henry continued to be civil to Anne, and even seemed to repose his usual confidence in Cromwell; but though he exerted this command over his temper, a discontent lay lurking in his breast, and was ready to burst out on the first opportunity: nor was it a great while ere such a one offered as inabled him at once to gratify his resentment, and ingratiate himself with the public.

The meanness of Cromwell's birth had rendered him odious to all the nobility; the Roman catholics detested him, for having been so active in the dissolution of religious houses; the reformers themselves were not very strongly attached to him as they saw he was not able to defend them from persecution; and the nation in general held him in discontent, for his having been the instrument of the king's extortions: Henry was now as ready to hearken to his accusers, as he was before deaf to them; and finding that several articles were ready to be brought against him, he resolved, at once

to gratify his own revenge, and appease the ~~the~~ ^{with} flamed populace, to give up a man who could no longer be of service to him; and having secretly provided himself with sufficient proof against his minister, in several very important points (sufficient in those days) he caused Cromwell to be arrested at the council-table by the duke of Norfolk, who there produced a charge against him for high treason; and on the tenth of June, 1540, when he did not in the least suspect it, he was carried away from the Palace to the Tower, without knowing his accusers, or the crimes of which he was accused; yet, from his first commitment, he made no doubt of a design being laid against his life, because the duke of Norfolk had always been his professed enemy; and was uncle to the lady Catherine Howard, for whom the king at that time began to entertain a passion.

During his confinement, he w^rote two letters to the king; one to vindicate himself of the crime of treason, and another concerning his marriage with Anne of Cleves. In the first he expressed ~~desire~~ ^{desire} to this purpose, “ That I never, in all my life, thought willingly to do that thing that might or should displease your majesty, and much less do or say any thing which of itself is so high and abominable an offence; as God knoweth, who, I doubt not, shall reveal the truth to your highness. Mine accusers, your grace knoweth, God forgive them: for as I ever had love to your honour, person, life, prosperity, health, wealth,

wealth, joy, and comfort; and also, your most dear and entirely beloved son, the prince his grace, and your proceedings; and confound me if ever I thought the contrary. What labours, pains, and travails I have undergone, according to my most bounden duty, God also knoweth; for if it were in my power, as it is in God's, to make your majesty to live, ever young and prosperous, Christ knoweth I would; for so am I, of all others, most bound: for your majesty hath been the most bountiful prince to me that ever was king to his subject: yea and more like a dear father, your majesty not offended, than a master.

“ Such hath been your most grave and godly counsel towards me at sundry times. In that I have offended I ask your mercy. Should I now for such exceeding goodness, benignity, liberality, and bounty be your traitor, nay then, the greatest pains were too little for me. Should any faction, or any affection to any point, make me a traitor to your majesty, then all the devils in hell confound me, and the vengeance of God light upon me, if I should once have thought it, most gracious sovereign lord!

“ Sir, as to your commonwealth, I have, after my wit, power, and knowledge travailed therein, having had no respect to persons, your majesty only excepted, and my duty to the same: but that I have done any injustice or wrong wilfully, I trust God shall bear me witness, and the world not be able to accuse me. Nevertheless, sir, I have meddled in so many

matter under your highness, that I am with
able to answer them all. But one thing I am
well assured of, that willingly and wittingly I
have not had will to offend your highness ;
but hard it is for me, or any other meddling
as I have done, to live under your grace, or
your

After this, he proceed to vindicate himself
from some particular charges brought against
him and closed the whole with these
words ; " written with the quaking hand, and
most sorrowful heart of your most sorrowful
subject, and most humble servant and prisoner,
this Saturday, at your Tower of London."

In the other letter, which he wrote by the
king's express commands, that he might de-
clare what he knew of the marriage, amongst
other particulars, he says, That when the king
had seen her at Rochester, he told him (Crom-
well) that if he had known so much before as
he then knew, she should not have come with-
in his realm ; saying, in a com-
laining manner, " What remedy ? " And the day after the
marriage, his majesty told him, " I liked her
before not well, but now I like her much
worse ; for I have felt her belly and her breasts,
and therby, as I can judge, she should be no
maid ; which struck me so to the heart when
I felt them, that I had neither will nor courage
to proceed any farther in other matters ;" say-
ing, " I have left her as good a maid as I found
her."

This letter concludes with these words :
Beseeching most humbly your grace to par-
don

to this my rude writing, and to consider that I am a most woeful prisoner, ready to take death, when it shall please God and your majesty ; and yet the frail flesh inciteth me continually to call to your grace for mercy and grace for mine offences ; and thus, Christ save, preserve, and keep you..

“ Written at the Tower this Wednesday, the last of June, with the heavy heart, and trembling hand, of your highness’s most heavy and most miserable prisoner, and poor slave, T. C. Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, inercy, mercy.”

But it was not the practice of king Henry to ruin his ministers and favourites by halves ; though the unhappy prisoner therefore, wrote, upon these occasions, in so moving a manner as even to draw tears from his eyes, he hardened himself against all motions of pity, and refused his pardon ; and Cromwell having heretofore given that abominable president of condemning persons unheard, he was now served in the same manner himself. But it is probable, indeed, that the court knew, if he was brought to a trial, he would so justify himself, by predicting the king’s orders and warrants ~~what~~ he had done, that it would be very difficult to condemn him ; and, even as it was, when the bill of attainder was sent down to the Commons, it did not pass with the same rapidity as it had done in the upper house ; but stuck ten days, till, at last, a new one was framed there, and sent up to the House of Lords.

"It is plain to perceive," says Burnet, "that most of the articles of his impeachment, related to orders and directions he had given, for which, it is very probable, he had the king's warrant. And, for the matter of heresy, the king had proceeded so far towards a reformation, that what he did that way was, in all probability, done by the king's orders: but the king now falling from these things, it was thought they intended to flise him by such an atta~~nder~~; that he might not discover the secret orders or directions he had given him for his own justification. For the particulars of bribery and extortion, with which he was also charged, they being mentioned in general expressions, seem only cast into the heap to defame him. But, for treasonable words which were alledged against him, it was generally thought that they were a contrivance of his enemies; since it seemed a thing very extravagant, for a favourite in the height of his greatness, to talk so rudely: and, if he had been guilty of it, Bedlam was thought a fitter place for his restraint than the Tower. Nor was it judged likely, that he, having such great and wretched enemies at least, any such discourses should have lain so long secret; or, if they had come to the king's knowledge, he was not a prince of such a temper, as to have forgiven, much less employed and advanced, a man after such discourses. And to think, that, during fifteen months after the words was said to have been spoken, none would have had the zeal for the king

king, or the malice to Cromwell, to repeat them, were things that could not be believed."

Like other persons in disgrace, poor Cromwell was deserted by most of his pretended friends. Archbishop Cranmer only did not abandon him in his distress, but wrote to the king very warmly in his behalf. In his letter he expressed himself to this purpose: "Who cannot but be sorrowful and amazed, that he should be a traitor against your majesty; he that was so advanced by your majesty; he, whose surety was only by your majesty; he, who loved your majesty (as I ever thought) no less than God; he, who studied always to set forward whatsoever was your majesty's will and pleasure; he that cared for no man's displeasure to serve your majesty; he that was such a servant, in my judgment, in wisdom, diligence, faithfulness, and experience, as no prince in his realm ever had; he that was so vigilant to preserve your majesty from all treasons, that few could be so secretly conceived, but he detected the same in the beginning. If the noble princes, of happy memory, king John, Henry II. and Richard II. had had such counsellors about them, I suppose they should never have been so traiterously abandoned and overthrown as those good princes were." But the duke of Norfolk, and the rest of the popish party, baffled all the application that was made in favour of the earl of Essex, who was, in pursuance of his attainder, brought to a scaffold erected on Tower-hill. Before his execution, he made the following

speech: " I am come hither to die, and not to ~~perge~~ myself, as may happen some think that I ~~wills~~, for, if I should so do, I were a very wretch and niser. I am by the law condemned to die, and thank my Lord God that hath appointed me this death for mine offence: for, since the time that I had years of discretion, I have lived a sinner, and offended my Lord God; for the which I ask him heartily forgiveness. And it is not unknown to many of you, that I have been a great tra-vailer in this world, and, being but of a base degree, was called to high estate; and since the time I came thereunto, I have offended my prince; for the which I ask him heartily forgiveness, and beseech you all to pray to God with me that he will forgive me. O Father, forgive me! O Son, forgive me! O Holy Ghost, forgive me! O Three Persons in One God, forgive me. And now I pray you that be here, to bear me record, I die in the catholic faith, not doubting in any article of my faith, no, nor doubting in any sacrament of the church. Many have slandered me, and reported, that I have been a bearer of such as have maintained evil opinions; which is untrue: but I confess that, like as God by his holy spirit doth instruct us in the truth, so the devil is ready to seduce us; and I have been seduced; but I bear witness, that I die in the catholic faith of the holy church; and I heartily desire you to pray for the king's grace, that he may long live with you, in health and prosperity; and, after him, that his son,

prince

prince Edward, may long reign over you. And once again I desire you to pray for me, that so long as life remaineth in this flesh, I waver nothing in my faith." Having spoken thus, which he seems to have done through the weakness natural to a dying man, or his affection to his son, whom he feared the king would pursue with further vengeance, if he attempted to vindicate himself at his death, he passed a few moments in his devotions, and then was beheaded on the 28th of July, 1540.

In this manner departed Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, who, if we may give credit to the best authorities concerning him, was a person of an uncommon prudence, abilities, and industry. His apprehension was ready, his judgment solid, his memory tenacious, his eloquence fluent, his deportment graceful, his heart generous and grateful, his temper patient, his conversation agreeable, and his friendship well-chosen and constant. But it was the policy of Henry VIII. as an excellent author observes, to chuse his favourites from amongst the meanest of the people, who being less scrupulous than others, and ready to do every thing that could promote their advancement, yielded a plenary obedience to his commands; and Cromwell, having formerly been the instrument of his tyranny and injustice to destroy others, it seems, in some measure, to have been a deserved judgment, that he should at last suffer by them himself.

THE LIFE OF
CARDINAL BEATOUN.

David Beatoun, archbishop of St. Andrew's, primate of Scotland, and cardinal of the Roman church, was descended from an honourable family in the north, being, according to Nesbitt's heraldry, the son of John Beatoun, of Balfour, by Isabel his wife, daughter of David Moniepenny, of Pitmilly in the county of Fife, and nephew to James Beatoun, his predecessor in the archbishopric of St. Andrew's. He was born in the year 1494, and it appears, that there was no care omitted to render his education equal to his birth. He passed through the various classes of school learning with rapidity, and having entered the university of St. Andrews, he began to display such a readiness of wit, and withal such an intense application to study, that his relations conceived great hopes of his becoming, one day or other, an honour and support to his family.

But these flattering expectations were entertained by no one with such a degree of warmth, as his uncle, the archbishop, who loved David at his own son: as the best method to secure his advancement in life, he sent him over to Paris, where our young Scot commencing a student in one of the colleges,



Cardinal Brulatour

perfected himself in the civil and canon law, and applied so diligently in divinity, in order to get qualified for the service of the church, that he entered into holy orders before he was nineteen years old ; and we find that he had the address, even prior to that event, to recommend himself in so particular a manner to the notice and favour of John, duke of Albany, then in France, whom the states of Scotland had made regent, during the minority of James V. that he was taken into the service of that nobleman ; and being employed by him in several affairs of the utmost importance, and always discharging the trust reposed in him with the utmost dispatch and fidelity, on the death of his grace's secretary, which happened in 1519, he was appointed, in his place, resident at the French court. This preferment abroad was attended with others in his own country, for about this time, his uncle, then archbishop of Glasgow, bestowed on him the recto of Campsay, notwithstanding he was but deacon's orders, as appears by the act of presentation, in which he is styled no more than clerk of the diocese of St. Andrew's ; so that he was beneficed in the church, and a minister of state, at the age of twenty-five.

Nor did his promotions rest long in this place ; for in the year 1523, his uncle being raised to the archbishopric of St. Andrew's, and commendatorship of Abroath, he resolved to resign the abbey in favour of his nephew, and for that end he prevailed with the duke regent

regent to write, in the most pressing manner, both in the young king's name and his own, to pope Adrian VI. to dispatch the bulls of his investiture ; and withal to entreat his holiness, that through the fullness of his dispensing power he would admit Mr. Beatoun to delay taking on him what they call the habit, for the space of two years ; which the pope, to gratify the king, acquiesced in. Mr. Beatoun remained in France two years after this ; and upon his return to Scotland in 1525, we find him taking his seat in parliament, as abbot of Abroath, those dignitaries sitting there in spiritual right, as our bishops have a place in the national assemblies now : and in the same year he was, by act of parliament, appointed, among other noblemen, to attend upon, and continue in company with, the king, at the same time that the earl of Angus was constituted one of the regents ; from whence one of the authors of the *Biographia Britannica* observes, that he had either wrought himself into some degree of confidence with the family of Douglas, or stood at that time in so great credit with the king, that even this powerful party did not think proper to remove him, though implacable enemies to his uncle the lord primate, which is, no doubt, a very high proof of his eminent abilities.

After this period, it does not appear, that in any of the subsequent changes of government he was ever under necessity to quit the person of his royal master : on the contrary, he grew into such an extraordinary degree of favour

favour with James, that, in 1528, on the resignation of bishop Crichton, he was promoted to the dignity of lord-privy-seal, in which capacity he assisted the king with his councils, and was considered as the person in whom his majesty most confided: nay, there are just grounds to believe, that it was by his persuasion the king of Scots created a college of justice in 1530, after the manner that Philip IV. of France had instituted a court of the same kind,

In the year 1533, he was intrusted with a very important commission, which obliged him to pass into France, in conjunction with Sir Thomas Erskine. This was to conclude an alliance between the two crowns, and a marriage with the daughter to the French king, which did not then take effect, because the princess was at that time in a very bad state of health, but the abbot of Frouath was likewise intrusted with some other secret commission, which obliged him to continue at the French court for some time; and he gave his master such intelligence from thence, as enabled him to secure his peace with his uncle, Henry VIII. of England, while he was complimented and caressed, in the most extraordinary manner, by the emperor and the pope, though those sovereigns were both violent enemies to the British monarch.

It was during the time he was thus employed at the French court, that our abbot laid the foundation of all his greatness; for by his address and understanding, he gained

so much on the good graces of Francis I. that he granted him many, and those too very singular, favours: first, by virtue of his prerogative, giving him all the privileges of a native of France, and afterwards conferring upon him a bishopric; marks of esteem not frequently bestowed on strangers, and never by so wise a prince as Francis I. without just cause; whence it has been conjectured, that Beatoun was now admitted into the whole system of French politics, and undertook to make his master coincide with them; so that what Francis I. gave him, was not so much encouragement as reward; and the emperor invading France in 1536, king James, by the advice of his minister, actually came, with the part of his nobility, to the assistance of the French monarch; being met upon the road by the dauphin, who conducted him to Paris, where he had all the honours paid him that he could desire; and what he seemed to wish most, the princess Magdalen, for whom he had sent two embaresses in vain, was given to him in person, whom, with great pomp, he espoused, on the first of January, 1537. But this lady dying in the month of July, following, soon after her arrival in Scotland, the abbot of Abroath, who returned with their majesties into that kingdom, was sent over again to Paris, to negotiate a second marriage for the king, with the lady Mary, daughter to the duke of Guise, and the widow of the duke of Longueville. During his stay, at this time, in the kingdom of France, he was

was consecrated bishop of Mirepoix ; and all things being at length settled, in the month of June 1538, he embarked, with his new mistress, for Scotland, where, after great hazard of being taken by the English, they safely arrived ; and, in the month of July, the royal nuptials were ciebrated at St. Andrew's just one year after the decease of the former queen.

Beatoun had now all the power and authority of an archbishop, though he was no more than coadjutor of St. Andrew's ; but this being thought an insufficiency of power to answer the ends which he had engaged to promote, he was by pope Paul III. through the recommendation, as some have thought, of the French king, raised to the purple, by the title of St. Stephen in Monte Sælio, his creation taking place on the twentyeth day of December 1538. But there is a letter of the cardinal's, on this occasion, to Andrew Olyphant, the Scotch agent at Rome, which shows to a demonstration, that he chiefly owed his dignity to the state of affairs in Scotland at that time, his own capacity, and the king's influence. The pope wanted such a man as Beatoun in his interest, when great strides were making every day towards demolishing the papal power, both in England and Scotland ; and it was with a design of attaching the clergy of the latter kingdom strictly to himself, that he gave them a head, who, for his own sake, would keep them firm to the apostolic see.

Yet

Yet it was not many months after this; that the cardinal was in no small danger of losing his master's confidence; for Henry VIII. having good intelligence of the motives which urged the pope to give Beatoun one of the scarlet hats, he sent, about this time, a very able minister to his nephew James, with particular instructions to procure the cardinal's disgrace, though the scheme laid for that purpose had not the desired effect, the Scotch king taking care to elude the English ambassador's instances, by such subtle and evasive answers, as left no room for taking offence, yet sent him back to his master without gaining what he came for; and Beatoun's uncle, the old archbishop, dying, in a few days, the cardinal succeeded in the primacy, whereby he was invested with as great, or greater power than ever any churchman had enjoyed in that kingdom before.

He was no soon advanced to this exalted station, than he began to discover the tyrannical and persecuting temper, which, during the rest of his life, was his distinguishing characteristic; and being determined to give the strongest proof of his attachment to the religion and interests of Rome, he, in May 1540, went to St. Andrew's in such pomp and splendor, as, till that day, no primate of Scotland had ever appeared in; being attended by the first people of the kingdom, both spiritual and temporal; and, in presence of these witnesses, he held in wonderful state and grandeur, a kind of visitation; in which

he

he told them how the catholic faith was insulted ; that heterodoxy was openly maintained, and too much encouraged, even within the court ; particularly he mentioned Sir John Borthwick, who had been cited to St. Andrew's for dispersing heretical books, and holding several opinions contrary to the doctrine of the Romish church ; who neither appearing in person, or by proxy, he was condemned for contumacy, on the 28th of May 1540, and his effigies were publicly burnt the same day in the market-place of St. Andrew, and a week after at Edinburgh ; and all persons were forbid to relieve or entertain him, on penalty of excommunication ; so that Sir John was forced to retire into England, where he was well received by Henry, and honoured with a public character for the Protestant princes in Germany. The cardinal still going on to prosecute several others for the same crime, particularly Mr. George Buchanan, the celebrated poet and historian : and they all would certainly have suffered, if they had not made their escape out of prison.

But these proceedings not answering Beatoun's purpose to the full, he had recourse to another method, which was, to engage the king to issue a commission for enquiring after heretics, and to place at the head of it Sir James Hamilton, bastard brother to the earl of Arran, a man of a barbarous and bloody temper, whom the king, till that time, had always hated, for many reasons. But the truth is, the king was filled with the hopes of obtaining

obtaining large sums of money by the conviction of such as were discovered to be favourers of Luther's doctrine: and in support of this scheme a roll was actually made, containing the names of 300 of the chief nobility, who were suspected, and might be prosecuted. But while Sir James Hamilton, the grand inquisitor in this dreadful office, was busy in accusing others for heresy, he was himself accused, convicted, and afterward executed for high treason; though James, having left all his subjects absolutely to the cardinal's mercy, there is no knowing what lengths he still might have gone had not Providence prevented the perpetration of his bloody designs, by the death of that monarch; who having, at his minister's instigation, directed his troops to invade England, they were at Solway Moss engaged and discomfited; which dismal overthrow had such an effect upon him, that, in the end, it broke his heart.

The situation in which the king's death left the nation, alarmed all ranks of men. A war against England had been undertaken, without necessity, and carried on without success; many persons of the first distinction had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and, among the rest of the nobles, there was little union, either in their views or their affections: add, too, that the religious disputes, occasioned by the opinions of the reformers, growing every day more violent, gave new rage to those factions which are natural to a form of government nearly Aristocratical. The government of

of an infant queen was still more destitute of real authority ; and James had not provided even a common remedy against the disorders of a minority, by committing to proper persons the care of his daughter's education, and the administration of affairs in her name ; so that, in mere despair, he abandoned them both to the mercy of fortune, and left open to every pretender the office of regent ; which he could not fix to his own satisfaction.

Cardinal Beaton, who had for many years been considered as prime minister, was the first that claimed that high dignity ; and, in support of his pretension, he produced a testament which he himself had forged in the name of the late king ; and, without any other right, instantly assumed the title of regent. He hoped, by the assistance of the clergy, the countenance of Bruce, the connivance of the queen dowager, and the support of the whole popish faction, to hold by force, what he had seized on by fraud. But Beaton had enjoyed power too long to be a favourite of the nation ; those among the nobles who wished for a reformation in religion dreaded his severity ; and others considered the elevation of a churchman to the highest office of the kingdom, as a depression of themselves ; at their instigation, therefore, James Hamilton, earl of Arran, and next heir to the queen, roused himself from his inactivity, and was prevailed on to aspire to the regency ; to which, proximity of blood, and former practice in like cases, gave him an undoubted

undoubted title. The nobles, who were assembled for this purpose, unanimously conferred on him the supreme office ; and the public voice applauded their choice.

No two men ever differed more widely in disposition and character, than the earl and Beatoun. The cardinal was by nature of immoderate ambition ; by long experience he had acquired address and refinement ; and insolence grew upon him from continual success. His high station in the church placed him in the way of great employments ; his abilities were equal to the greatest of these. As his own eminence was founded upon the power of the church of Rome, he was a zealous defender of that superstition, and, for the same reason, an avowed enemy to the doctrine of the reformers. Political motives, alone, determined him to support the one, or to oppose the other. His early application to public business kept him unacquainted with the learning and controversies of the age ; he gave judgment, upon all points in dispute, with a precipitancy, violence, and rigour, which cotemporary historians mention with indignation. The character of the earl Arran was, in almost every thing, the reverse. He was neither infected with ambition, nor inclined to cruelty : the love of ease extinguished the former ; the softness of his temper preserved him from the latter. Timidity and irresolution were his predominant failings ; the one occasioned by his natural constitution, and the other arising from a consciousness that his

his abilities were not equal to his station. With these dispositions he might have enjoyed and adorned private life ; but his public conduct was without courage, dignity or conscience ; the perpetual slave of his own fears, and, in consequence, the perpetual tool of those who found their advantage in practising upon them. But as no other person could be set in opposition to the cardinal, with any probability of success, the nation declared in his favour with so general a consent, that the artifices of his rival could not withstand its united strength.

This was in the year 1542, the celebrated Mary queen of Scots being then but a few days old : and, before the close of the same year, the earl of Arran was firmly settled in the regency, to the utter exclusion of the cardinal ; which was brought about, chiefly, by the laids who were in the English interest, and desirous of complying with a proposal made by Henry VIII. for a marriage between Edward, his only son, and the infant queen : this proposal, indeed, was also relished by all who feared the cardinal or favoured the change of religion ; for they were fond of an alliance which afforded protection to the doctrine they had embraced, as well as to their own persons, against the power of a Roman catholic prelate. But Henry's rough and overbearing temper rendered this scheme abortive. He had at once alarmed and irritated the whole Scottish nation, by demanding that the queen's person should immediately be committed to his custody ; and that the govern-

ment of the kingdom should be put in his hands during her minority. What people would not scorn to purchase an alliance, however great, at the price of their liberty? The parliament of Scotland, notwithstanding, influenced by some of their nobles, seemed very studious of a peace with the English king; and cardinal Beatoun being the only obstruction to the measures leading to it, he was, by order of the regent, seized, and sent prisoner to the castle of Blackness, after the English ambassadors had failed, in a daring attempt to carry off both the young queen and him as a prize to their impatient master.

But things remained not long in this situation; the cardinal, though under restraint, found means to attach so strong a party to his interest, and, what was still more extraordinary, had gained so many of the people about the regent, that, not knowing how to secure himself, that nobleman was forced to let him at liberty: an event, no doubt, which is very expressive of Beatoun's genius and character; who knew how to court and manage factions so well, that, from being excluded the court, and imprisoned, he, upon the young queen's coronation, was again admitted of the council, and, at the request as well as by the consent of the regent, assumed the high office of chancellor, out of which the archbishop of Glasgow was turned, to make way for him.

After this the cardinal proceeded to give new proof of his art and address. The treaty which had been signed with Henry, during his confinement at Blackness, though on a

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more equitable footing than at first proposed, was still manifestly to the advantage of England: he complained loudly upon this account, and said that the regent had betrayed the nation to its most inveterate enemies, and sacrificed its honour to his own ambition. He foretold the extinction of the true catholic religion, under the tyrannical usurpation of an excommunicated heretic; but, above all, he lamented to see an ancient kingdom, contenting to its own slavery; and in one hour, the weakness or treachery of a single man, surrendering every thing, for which the Scots had struggled through many a g. The rage of the people was to such a height upon these remonstrances, that the English ministers could hardly be protected from their insults. The clergy contributed a great sum towards preserving the church from the dominion of a prince, whose system of reformation was so fatal to their power; and the nobles, after having mortified the cardinal so lately in such a cruel manner, were now ready to applaud and to second him, as the defender of the honour and liberty of his country.

Fired by these encouragements, his ambition and zeal grew equally intemperate; he immediately seized on the persons of the young queen and her mother, and added to his party the splendor and authority of the royal name. But about the same time he received a more real accession to his strength, by the arrival of Matthew Stuart, earl of Lenox, whose return from France he had earnestly solicited. This young nobleman was hereditary enemy

of the house of Hamilton; he had many claims upon the regent, and pretended a right to exclude him, not only from succeeding to the crown, but to deprive him of the possession of his private fortune. The cardinal flattered his vanity with the prospect of marrying the queen dowager, and affected to treat him with so much studied respect, that the regent became jealous of him as a rival in power.

Mean while the day appointed for the ratification of the treaty with England approached; and the regent was quite undetermined how to proceed, and acted to the last with that irresolution and inconsistency, which is peculiar to weak men, when they are so unfortunate as to have the chief part in the conduct of difficult affairs. On the 25th of August, he ratified the treaty with Henry, and proclaimed the cardinal, who still continued to oppose it, an enemy to his country: but on the 3d of September, he secretly withdrew from Edinburgh, met with the cardinal at Callender, renounced the friendship of England, and declared for the interest of France. Beaumont's interest was from this moment so great with the earl of Arran, and so well established, that he might be said to have as much influence over him as he had over the king, which manifestly appeared by procuring him to solicit the court of Rome to extend his almost boundless authority, by appointing his legate a latere from the pope.

The first instance after his entrance upon this new office, which the cardinal gave of his devotion to the see of Rome, was to work so

upon the regent, as to make him publicly abjure the doctrine of the reformers, and declare for the old faith; this being accomplished, he set about working the hereticks. But he had address enough to procure such numbers of persons of high rank and distinction to be present at, and to attend him in, his judicestries, that, ~~as if it app~~ ^{using} an act of his own, or the effect of his intrigues, it looked rather as a thing imposed upon him, and in which he acted with the approbation of the nobility and gentry, as well as clergy of the kingdom. Such was the wonderful dexterity of this man, and such the zeal with which, to the ~~very~~ utmost of his power, he promoted the cause of pope y. With a view to serve this cause still more effectually, he summoned, in the beginning of 1546, a provincial assembly of the clergy, at the Black Friars in Edinburgh; and proposed attaining vast matters at this meeting, which he opened with a speech, wherein he shewed, that religion was in great danger from the prevailing of heresy, for which he said he knew but two remedies: the first to proceed vigorously against such as either adhered to or encouraged the new opinions; the other was to reform the scandalous and immoral lives of the clergy, which gave the greatest pretence for men to separate from the church: but the cardinal was soon diverted from the purposes he had then in hand, by an information he received, that Mr. George Wishart, the most famous protestant preacher in Scotland, was at the same time actually in the house of Mr. Cockburn, of Ormiston, in

East Lothian. He directly applied to the governor, to cause Wishart to be apprehended; and having, with much difficulty, prevailed, his eminency went in person, with the earl of Bothwell, who was sheriff of the county, to see the culprit apprehended: but not satisfied with this, the cardinal was determined to proceed to extremities. He procured an act of council, therefore, requiring the earl of Bothwell to deliver his prisoner to the lord governor; pursuant to which Wishart was first carried to the house of Elphinston, where the cardinal then was; from thence to the castle of Edinburgh; and, by the queen dowager's persuasion, the governor caused him to be transferred to the castle of St. Andrew's: this was all Beatoun desired; and as soon as he had got the unfortunate man into his power, Trial was the word, and, Condemn him to the stake. But because he would keep up some shew of justice, he summoned the prelates to meet on the twenty-seventh of February following, which they accordingly did: but the archbishop of Glasgow very wisely proposed an application to the governor for a commission to some men of quality, to try so famous a prisoner, that the whole blame might not fall upon the clergy; to which the cardinal agreed, and the governor at first made no great scruple of the thing; however, Mr. Hamilton of Preston, having some conversation with him before the signing of the warrant, in which he shewed him the folly of taking the thorn out of another man's foot, to thrust it into his own; in the end, his lordship sent

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the cardinal wrote, " That he would do well not to precipitate Wishart's trial, but delay it until his coming; for as to himself, he would not consent to his death before the cause was very well examined; and if his eminency should do otherwise, he would make protestation, that the blood of the man should be required at his hands."

When the cardinal received this message, he was equally angry and perplexed; yet resolved to go on with the business, he sent this return to the governor, " That he had not wrote to him about this matter, as supposing himself to be any way dependant upon his authority, but from a desire that the persecution and conviction of heretics, might have a show of public consent; which, since he could not this way obtain, he would proceed in that way which, to him, appeared most proper." And in pursuance of this declaration, he indicted Mr. Wishart upon eighteen articles, notwithstanding his appeal, as being the governor's prisoner, to a temporal judicatory; and having tried and condemned him, caused him to be burnt at St. Andrew's, on the second of March; forbidding all persons to pray for him, under pain of incurring the severest censures of the church. As for Wishart, he died with great firmness, constancy, and Christian courage, and was held as a saint and martyr by all those of the reformed persuasion.

It is easy to imagine that this proceeding made a great noise throughout the kingdom; such as were zealous papists, magnified the

spirit and steadiness of the cardinal; others of more moderation, censured it as a rash and very imprudent action which could not but be attended with very dismal consequences; and the friends to the protestant cause openly declared, that as it was done without due course of law, it ought to be considered as a murder; which, if unquestioned by the state, private men might revenge. As for the cardinal, he did not seem to be highly concerned at the rumours which his conduct in this matter had raised; he was so much persuaded in himself of his great interest among the nobility, that he did not apprehend any sort of danger from the governor's displeasure; and, on the other hand, he thought, that having embarked the whole clergy of Scotland in the same cause with himself, he was sure of all the interest they had among the people. There is a circumstance mentioned by several historians, which plainly proves, that the cardinal was, at the time we now mention, at the height of his fortune and wishes; and that he was intent upon nothing but the means of adding to, and securing the same prosperity for the future. For it appears that he went, soon after the death of Mr. Wishart, to Finhaven, the seat of the earl of Crawford, to solemnize a marriage between the eldest son of that nobleman, and his own natural daughter, Margaret; which was performed in great pomp and splendor. This fact is the clearest proof that the cardinal had no dread or terror upon his mind, but thought his condition as secure, if not more so, than ever;

ever; and we are likewise told that he stood in very high credit with the greatest men in the kingdom, when he was able to ally himself, by his illegitimate issue, to one of the most ancient and honourable families in Scotland.

But while he was thus employed, and in the midst of his rejoicing, he had intelligence that an English squadron was upon the coast; and, that consequently an invasion was to be feared: upon this he immediately returned to St. Andrew's, and appointed a day for the nobility and gentry of that country to meet and consult about the proper means of raising such a force as might be sufficient to secure them from any attempts of an enemy. He began likewise to strengthen the fortifications of his own castle at that city, into which he was at any time able to put a garrison sufficient to defend it. But the time of meeting not being come, and no farther news being heard of the English fleet, he was more intent upon rendering the castle tenable against a foreign force, than solicitous about assembling such a number of men, or taking such other precautions, as might secure him from being surprised by his foes at home, of which he does not seem to have entertained the smallest suspicion.

While he was busy about the matters above related, there came to him the eldest son of the earl of Rothes, Mr. Norman Lesley, a gentleman with whom he had ~~every~~ intimate friendship the design of his visit was to ask some favour, which he might expect to have granted; but the cardinal absolutely refused him.

him, and provoke him thereby to such a degree, that they parted in great displeasure. Now it happened that this gentleman's uncle, Mr John Leslie, was one of the most violent enemies the cardinal had, as soon as he heard therefore of the ill usage his nephew had received, he knowing his passionate temper and daring spirit, resented him immediately, aggravated the injury done him by the cardinal, and brought with him several other persons, who sought themselves wronged by that prelate, and in the end it was agreed among them that the cardinal should be suddenly cut off.

There was but very few concerned in this conspiracy, and of them the principal persons were, Norman Leslie, John Leslie, William Kirkaldy of Grange, Peter Carmichael of Iife, and Jamie Melvil. The scheme they laid, was to meet at Andrews with as much privacy as possible, and to surprise the castle in a morning before the cardinal's servants were stirring, and they entered into an agreement under their hands, to be at that city on the twenty eighth of May, and to behave in the mean time in such a manner as to afford no room for suspicion.

They accordingly met in the abbey church-yard, and determined that Kirkaldy should take six persons with him to secure the gate; which he did, by engaging the porter in discourse till his master might be spoke with; when the two Leslie's coming up, with four other conspirators, they seized the servant and got possession of his keys.

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The next thing they did, was to send four persons to watch the cardinal's chamber, that he might have no notice given him of what was doing ; they afterwards went and called up the servants, to whom they were very well known, and turned them, to the number of fifty, out at the gate, as they did above an hundred workmen employed in repairing the castle ; but the eldest son of the regent, who was with the cardinal, they kept for their own security ; all this being executed with so little noise that Beatoun never awoke. At length, however, they came and knocked at his chamber door ; upon which, starting from his sleep, he cried out, "Who's there ?" to which John Lesley made answer, "My name is Lesley ;" "Which Lesley ?" replied the cardinal : "Is it Norman ?" "No matter," said John Lesley, "you must open the door, those who are here." However, instead of doing this, the cardinal instantly rose and began to barricade the door in the best manner he could ; then the conspirators called for fire ; but, while it was fetching, Beatoun having conferred with them, upon a promise being made him that no violence should be offered towards his person, he opened the door, when the whole party rushing upon him with their naked swords, put an end to his life in an instant, notwithstanding the obligation they were under, by their assurance, to spare it.

The circumstances of this prelate's death have been differently reported and variously censured, according to the sentiments of those by whom they are recorded. As for his char-

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rather, it is taken from an ingenious contra-
tress of his own, who says, "Cardinal Beaufort
did not use his power with a moderation equal
to the prudence by which he attained it.
Notwithstanding his great abilities, he had
too many of the passions and prejudices of an
angry leader of a faction, to govern a divided
people with temper. His resentment against
one part of the nobility, and his benevolence
towards the rest, his severity to the reformers,
and, above all, his barbarous and illegal pro-
secution of the famous George Wishart, a
man of honourable birth and primitive sancti-
ty, wore out the patience of a fierce age." Another
writer speaking of him says, "I hold
he was not remarkable for his learning, yet
he was very far from being deficient in that
point. And though he is grievously censured
by some, as well as highly extolled by others,
yet it seems to be a thing agreed by all, that
his abilities were no way inferior to his for-
tune. He was a great friend to his family;
and, though a priest, left behind him a posse-
sion, which maintained an honourable rank
in their native country. He was so well be-
loved by the people of St Andrew's, that, as
soon as they knew his castle was seized, they
rose, in hopes of delivering him, but his
dead body being exposed from a window, their
hearts failed them, and they dispersed."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

